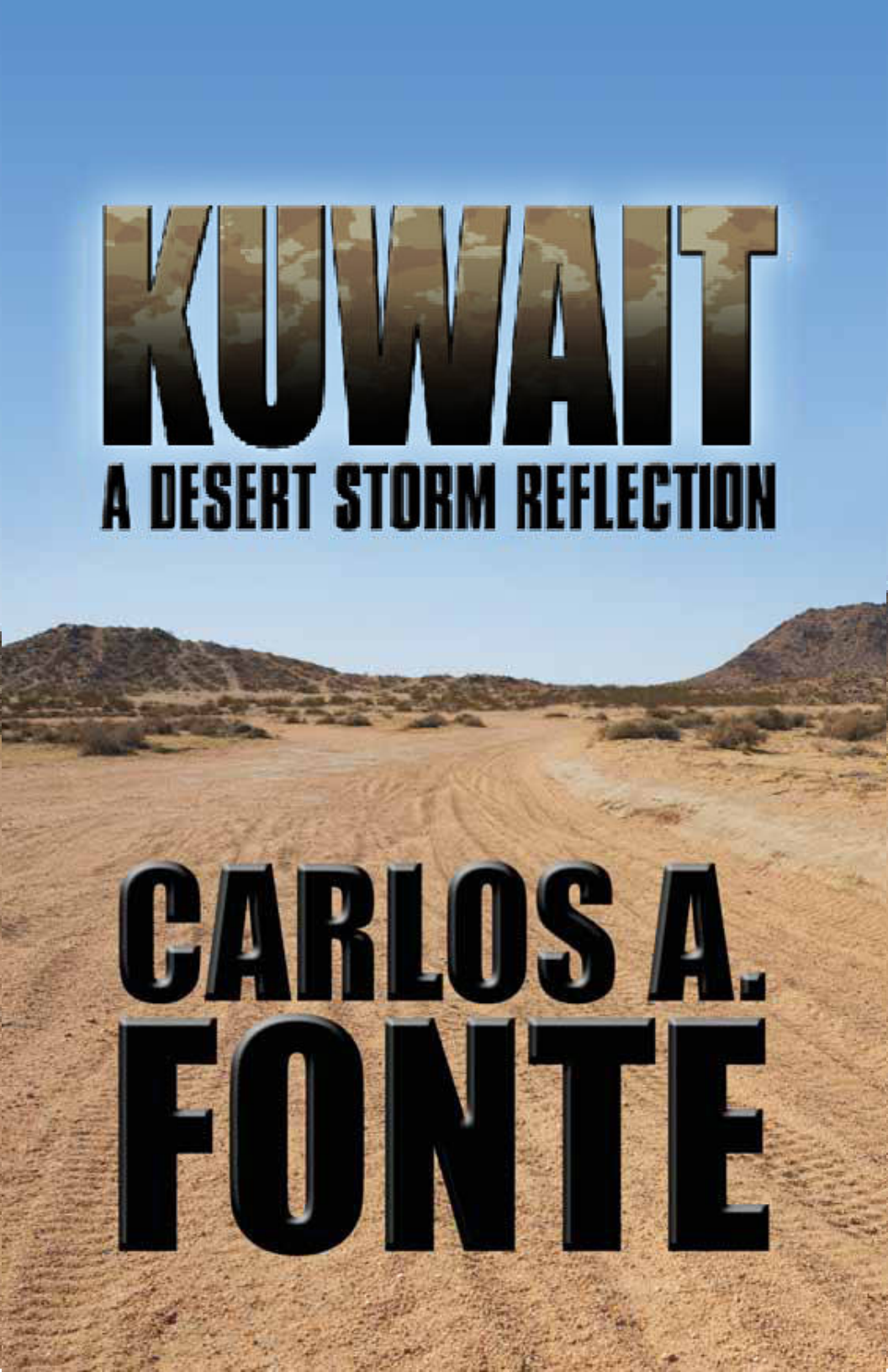


The background of the entire image is a photograph of a desert landscape. A wide, sandy dirt road with visible tire tracks leads from the bottom center towards the horizon. The road is flanked by sparse, low-lying desert shrubs. In the distance, there are several low, rounded hills under a clear, pale blue sky. The overall scene is bright and arid.

KUWAIT

A DESERT STORM REFLECTION

**CARLOS A.
FONTE**

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Preface/Dedication

This is my story and reflections on how an omnipotent, omniscient and loving God, reached down to His creation and delivered me out from of one of life's great trials — war and even more importantly, liberated me from sin's final effect, eternal separation from Himself.

PSALM 91

He that dwelleth in THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day; *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

Acknowledgements

No words, thoughts or actions could ever describe the indebtedness I have to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you Lord! He has blessed me with a Godly wife, Andrea, who has endured my retelling this story for over a decade now. She is an answered prayer in my life. What a marvelous blessing that she is carrying yet another servant for the Lord. Peter or Faith we love you! My darling children, Lily, Joy and Andrew listened kindly and laughed with me at some of the “funny” parts. Little Grace’s beaming smiles consistently encourage me.

I would also like to acknowledge my father, Cruz, who told me as a boy that every man should write a book. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Bonza, my English teacher at Brookside Junior High School in Sarasota, Florida. He encouraged me by telling me during a creative writing class that I could be a writer after grading a western story paper I turned in to him. Mr. Thorngood, who was at the same school, taught 7th Grade Social Studies. He taught me to honor our brave World War II veterans. On December 7th, he made learning about America’s entry into the war in 1941 fun to learn.

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1

THE COLD WAR: SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall
abide under the SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY

“Shadow of the Almighty”

Infinite and perfect love,
There is none who has ever known;
Except when He came from above,
With boldness until in your heart His love has grown.

His Shadow over us He has cast,
For the seeker who is weary and lost;
To find rest and peace at last,
Who has ever counted the cost?

Mighty God, who has given His only Son,
Holy Spirit all-powerful and true;
Merciful Savior triumphant “it is done,”
Blessed Trinity forever may we worship you!

The Cuban Exodus
January 1970

“Don’t lie to me. Are we in the United States?” Cruz Fonte
asked the immigration officer upon the small plane landing on

the airfield. He had been jailed in Cuba on several occasions for months at a time for being “counter-revolutionary.” He arrived with his wife, Martha (my brothers and I called her Mima), and their four sons, Rene, Felix, Cesar and Carlos.

God in His mercy and providence orchestrates events and people to achieve His purposes for His glory, which often blesses His people. One such event during the Cold War was the Cuban Freedom Flights. A massive exodus of Cubans from the communist atheist island nation, Cuba, had begun in 1965 and continued until 1973. More than a quarter million Cubans arrived in the United States on these Freedom Flights, or as the Cubans called them, los Vuelos de la Libertad. One such flight arrived on Friday January 9, 1970.

Cruz, my father (we affectionately called him Papi), after disembarking from the plane, was separated from his family and questioned in the Freedom Tower in Miami for hours by the FBI. He had been a union leader in a small factory and the FBI wanted to determine if he had any useful information. Afterwards he was reunited with his family and they began their life with a new sense of freedom

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

“Count your blessings. Remember you have ten fingers and ten toes. Some people do not,” my father often reminded us with all seriousness. I would learn early on in life that we were to be thankful for not only for our health, but also for our freedom as well. Economically we were poor yet very rich in family unity and love.

We moved from Chicago to Florida, the land of alligators, dolphins and Mickey Mouse, in 1974. Living in Sarasota, Florida we had access to some of the most beautiful beaches America had to offer as well as access to Florida's largest state park, Myakka River State Park. Weekends were often spent at Siesta Key running in and out of the warm gulf waters with the waves and fiddler crabs. Families did not need to spend much if anything at all to enjoy God's beautiful creation.

We lived in a small wooden-framed 3 bedrooms and 1-1/2 bathrooms (my father added a toilet to one of the rooms) home without air-conditioning or central heat. Our yard was small, but efficiently utilized. Across from our home were woods that we affectionately called "Skeeter Drain" for the mosquitoes were vicious.

Skeeter Drain was our training ground as children. It was there where we learned to hunt, trap, build forts, fell a tree, and how to find our way out when we got lost. Many imaginary battles took place in those woods. On one occasion when we were playing Tarzan swinging on vines, I got my left leg just above the ankle caught on a nail from our steps "ladder" and dangled in the air holding onto the vine. That cost me an emergency room visit and 12 stitches. Once we saw blood on the road in front of a friend's house. A man had been attacked by a bobcat and had dragged himself out of Skeeter Drain. An older neighborhood friend went out into Skeeter Drain in search of that bobcat and successfully hunted it down. A neighborhood friend killed a large rattlesnake, which his mother fried for us to eat. We buried its head concerned that someone might step on it and get the snake's poison injected into their foot. This same friend's mother told me one day that she liked my influence on her son. Unfortunately he later became Sarasota's most wanted.

Neighbors helped neighbors, back then. My father had been an electrician and would assist other neighborhood dads with electrical work. If you needed plumbing work, there was a neighbor who could help. Livestock was also shared among neighbors.

One day my father brought home three hundred chickens mixed in with several turkeys. We raised other livestock as well. Hogs, wild boars, were a common staple, as were chicken, rabbits and ducks. I found out that my neighbor skinned a hog like you would a deer, while we used scalding water poured over the skin to shave it in order to preserve the skin for pork rinds, or “chicharróns” as Cubans call them. We even raised a calf one time. Her name was Daisy. Two horses, Queen and Jeopardy, were ours to enjoy for a time, until they became too expensive and time consuming to maintain. We rode the horses bareback since we couldn’t afford saddles. There was a time when a friend and I decided to loosen the rope that tied Jeopardy and chase him around the borrowed pasture down the road from my home. We both tried to jump up on him at the same time and got bucked off bumping our heads together. Thankfully neither of us was injured.

At the age of nine, I remember falling asleep on an inflatable raft with my mother. Neither of us could swim and the current took us out a considerable distance. When we awakened we realized our predicament. To make matters even more critical, I fell off of the raft. Only by the grace of God was my mother able to hold onto me by the wrist. She would grow tired and I would go under water. Finally, a lady had seen us struggling and swam out to get us and take us back to shore. I nearly drowned since I did not know how to swim.

Becoming a U.S. citizen is a memory that I cherish. I was 10-years-old and we went to a courthouse in Tampa to take the oath of citizenship. I remember that at my school it was announced that we had become citizens. My teacher asked me if I was now going to change my name to Charles.

I had always believed in God. Or so I thought. One day I remember asking a friend, "How can you not believe in God?" He told me that his family just never did. In reality my family rarely went to church. The only knowledge that I had about Christianity was looking at a candle, usually of Jesus or Mary, His mother, that my mother, Mima, had on the counter to burn. She also had a 3-D postcard with a really neat facsimile of the Last Supper painting by Leonardo Da Vinci on it. I believe we went to church when there was a wedding, funeral or some special mass. Usually weekends were reserved for going to the beach, baseball games in the Babe Ruth League or traveling down Alligator Alley to go visit a Great Uncle in Miami who was in a form of highway patrol in Cuba during Batista's presidency. He was actually placed against the wall to be shot by Fidel Castro's cronies. The guns were empty and the firing pins made a loud click. Castro's people liked to play psychological games with Cuban patriots. I remember at Christmas time one of my friend's mother would put the words "Happy Birthday Jesus" on her front window. All of the kids in the neighborhood, including me, thought she was a little crazy.

On occasions I got to spend the night with my best friend at his grandmother's house. He and I belonged to the 7-11 Club. He was seven and I was eleven. Of course we were the only two in the club. He later on became a Christian as an adult. I

realized that I had only seen my father's mother once since coming from Cuba at the age of two and had never again seen my mother's mom. Anger and resentment toward the evils of communism brewed within me. Secretly, I often daydreamed of returning to Cuba to liberate her.

Another friend's older brother had me drive his truck slowly along a state road in the grass while he tried to use a 9-foot cast net, which he used for mullet fishing in the bay along oyster beds, to catch a wild boar hog on the side of the road while we listened to Johnny Horton's song "The Battle of New Orleans" on his cassette player. He missed and the sow ran into the palmetto bushes. This same older brother took my friend and I rabbit hunting one Easter morning.

Called to Serve

Freedom was never free. In my deep gratitude I had a strong desire to serve a great nation, which had afforded my family the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of our labor and to be able to speak freely without the fear of retribution. Even in high school I was led to join the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC). I knew that I wanted to join the U.S. Armed Forces after graduating from high school. The Cold War was still on and in 1983 the news of President Reagan's invasion of Grenada known as Operation Urgent Fury, where some communist Cubans were engaged with and captured by U.S. forces, made me think even more of joining the armed forces at some point after my graduation in 1985 to help defend my adopted country.

I was working at Winn-Dixie when my produce manager and

friend told me that he was in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and that his unit was in Tampa. I became very interested and decided to go ahead with my desire to serve America through the Marines. I went to visit my local recruiter who was happy to fill me in with the wonderful opportunities that the Marines had to offer. I had told him that I wanted the Marine Reserves and wanted to become an amphibious assault vehicle crewmember (also known as an amtracker), just like my friend, and to join the reserve unit in Tampa. He assured me that he could do that. After taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), my recruiter's Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) a gunnery sergeant, called me inform me of the good news that I had done so well on the ASVAB that he could offer me a 42 week avionics course. I told him no and that I wanted to become an amtracker and was not interested in avionics. He became very angry at me and began yelling and swearing stating that I would not get into his Corps for being so stupid as to pass up a 42 week course in avionics for an 8 week course to become an amtracker. He hung up on me. Soon afterwards my recruiter called me and told me that if I still wanted amtracks he would get me amtracks. I met him in his office. A John Wayne poster promoting the movie "Sands of Iwo Jima" hung on the wall. We sat down and completed the necessary paperwork for me to enlist in the United States Marine Corps.

Adopted Into the Kingdom of God

1987

One night while watching the 700 Club with Pat Robertson, I remember feeling a lot of anger and hatred toward a seemingly hopeless situation that had left my family separated. I

was angry at the world. Pat spoke and told me that I was a sinner and that Jesus had died on the cross for me. He let me know that I needed Jesus to be my Savior to save me from my sins. For the first time I began to understand, truly understand. I knew what the Bible was, but had never studied what it had said. He said that in the book to the Romans Paul had written, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" and that, "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." He went on to say that Paul continued with, "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." There was no escaping it. I felt convicted as if I had been on trial for a crime and the evidence against me ironclad. I cried out to God my rightful judge with tears flowing down my cheeks and repeated my own version of Pat's recommended "sinner's" prayer, "God, I am a sinner. I need your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus died for me and that He rose again on the third day. Please forgive me and be my Lord!" I don't remember the exact day or even month, but do remember it was in 1987. In 1987, I was born again, adopted into the family of God, a new citizen of the Kingdom of God. His amazing grace was richly and freely bestowed upon me that night. My first adoption had been by a great nation giving my family and me freedom from oppression. My second adoption I was given true freedom. A freedom from the bondage of sin to live in peace with God and to have as a free gift eternal life because of what God's only Son, Jesus Christ, had completed over 2000 years ago. I am so grateful to my Lord Jesus Christ and recognize that as Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians, "And that he died for all, that they which live (are born again) should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again," I desire to live for Him and no longer for myself.

***Parris Island, South Carolina —
Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD)
May to July 1987***

”In a moment I am going to tell you to get off my bus. When I do, I want you to get off this bus as fast as you can and then step onto the yellow footprints painted on the sidewalk,” explained a man dressed in woodland camouflage who boarded our bus when we entered the gate into Parris Island. The Marine dressed in woodland camouflage barked at the top of his lungs “Now, get off my bus!!” Everyone on that bus, including me, knew that that Marine meant business and we scrambled to get off the bus as fast as we could. It was around 1:00 a.m. and we would not sleep that first day on the Island.

We were quickly learning how to sit deathly still when seated or standing at attention so as not to draw attention to ourselves and bring on the wrath of two or three very angry Marines ready to dispense cruel punishment in the form of severe calisthenics designed to melt away not only fat from the body but individualism from the individual. I thought to myself, “What have I gotten myself into?”

We sat at attention in student desks listening to instructions to fill out forms and review personal data during processing. Then there was a contraband search. Some of the guys did not heed their recruiter’s instruction when they were “Poolees,” civilians who signed the dotted line on the contract to enlist into the Marine Corps and were just waiting to go to Marine Corps boot camp. Contraband such as tobacco products and pocketknives were confiscated.

Necessary items for training, such as canteens, woodland camouflage uniforms and black combat boots, were received during Initial Issue. We were herded through a supply room like cattle. Everyone had to raise into the air the item called out so that the supply clerk could visualize that each recruit had the item. Following initial issue was haircuts. The clippers were on overtime as all hair was removed down to the scalp on 70 recruits. This was followed by a PX (Post Exchange) stop. Chits (naval terminology for paper authorization or receipt) were given to allow for us to purchase specific items from a list including toothpaste and deodorant.

Medical exams, dental exams and eye exams followed. Vaccinations and close examinations were performed to ensure that we were in sufficient shape to endure the coming physical demands that would be placed on our bodies over the next 13 weeks. In the Marine Corps medical personnel as well as chaplains are provide by the United States Navy. We went down to the Beaufort Naval Hospital for these examinations. Most places that we went to on Parris Island that required considerable distance we traveled to in "Cattle Cars." I remember the Cattle Cars being overcrowded. The Drill Instructor would yell, "Pack it in like sardines you pukes!" Standing tightly together within the Cattle Cars kept us from falling over on the drive.

Equipment issue was next. The A.L.I.C.E. (All-Purpose Lightweight Individual Carrying Equipment) pack was issued to us along with an entire class on how to pack it correctly. I learned that there was a specific spot for everything from our E-tool (Entrenching shovel) to our mat roll. Our web belt and harness had a specific place for the Moon Beam (L-shaped flashlight) and canteens.

Upon having our rifles issued to us we were told that we would become one with it. We would take better care of it than ourselves. A cable and lock were issued in order to lock it to our metal bunks at night. Disassembly and assembly of the M-16 A2 rifle would be taught and practiced until we could assemble the weapon in less than 2 minutes.

Initial PFT (Physical Fitness Test) or strength test was administered. This consisted of three items (pull-ups, sit-ups and a three-mile run) each worth 100 points for a possible perfect score of 300. To get the full 100 points for the pull-ups one would have to complete 20 or more pull-ups. No extra points were given for extra pull-ups. The maximum score of 100 for sit-ups required the recruit to complete at least 80 sit-ups in 2 minutes. A perfect score of 100 for the three-mile run was to complete the run in 18 minutes or less. I was able to complete 19 pull-ups, 80 sit-ups and run three miles in 20 minutes and 54 seconds.

Along with our uniforms we were issued a woodland camouflage New Testament Bible. On Sunday morning we were told that we would go to church. If we really were set on not attending church, then we were welcome to stay back and clean the squad bay. All but one or two die-hard atheist went to church every Sunday while we were on the Island.

Each morning, except Sundays, which was a day to attend church on base, our platoon would awaken at 0530 to clean the Squad Bay (our shared living quarters) then march down to the Chow Hall for breakfast. No one was allowed to eat until everyone was seated. Each recruit sat at attention until

given the order by the Drill Instructor, “Ready. Eat,” which meant the last recruit had sat down after getting his chow. After breakfast we would gather with other platoons to perform the Daily Dozen exercises, which include Push-Ups, Sit-ups, Bends-and-Thrusts, Mountain Climbers, Leg Lifts, Left and Right Lateral Bends at the hip, Forward and Back Bends at the hip, Neck Rotations, Arm Circles, Running-in-Place, Jumping Jacks and Weight Lifts. Every morning after the Daily Dozen we ran three miles in platoon formation. This is when the Drill Instructors would chant cadence songs to keep us running in unison. Cadence songs had catchy tunes and rhythms such as, “Mama, mama can’t you see what the Marine Corps has done for me . . .,” “Born in the woods, raised by a bear, double set of dog teeth, triple coat of hair. My M-16 and two magazines. I’m lean and mean. I’m a U.S. Marine . . .” and “My Marine Corps colors are red to show the world the blood we shed . . .” A circuit course and an obstacle course were utilized to help develop our strength, speed and agility.

I was assigned to Platoon 2052 part of 2nd Battalion. Platoon 2052 had 70 recruits. Everyday was hot on the Island that summer. Anytime the temperature would reach above 86 degrees we would notice a black flag go up. We were not to train outside during “black flag” days. On one such day one of our drill instructors (D.I.) let us know how sorry he was that we couldn’t go outside to “play.” He made up for it by allowing us to have a hurricane party in our squad bay. We were told to get our ponchos on and to begin marching around the outer perimeter of our bunks carrying our footlockers. We then were instructed to dump out all of our footlockers and pretend we were steam shovels and push all of our personal effects from the footlockers into a giant mound in the middle of the squad

bay. Apparently the Drill Instructor felt bad that we had such a mess and decided to give us 2 minutes to pick everything up and put back into the footlockers. There of course was no time to look for your own personal belongings and we had to stuff whatever was nearest to us into our own footlockers. During our 1-hour “free time,” the only time we got during the day to iron uniforms, shine boots or write letters home, we attempted to figure out whose stuff was whose.

We quickly learned that every Marine was a rifleman first and memorized the Marine Corps Hymn:

From the Halls of Montezuma,
To the shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land, and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
Of United States Marine.

Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in every clime and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far-off Northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on the job
The United States Marines.

Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life

And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines.

Another hymn, a Christian hymn, "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" originally written by William Whiting, used by the U.S. Navy's as their hymn, could very well have been a Marine's hymn and prayer to an Almighty Triune God as well:

Eternal Father, strong to save, Whose arm hath bound the
restless wave, Who bids the mighty ocean deep Its
own appointed limits keep; O hear us when we
cry to Thee for those in peril on the sea,

O Savior, whose almighty word The winds and waves
submissive heard, Who walked upon the foaming deep, And
calm amid the rage did sleep; Protect us by Thy
guarding hand From ev'ry peril on the land.

O Spirit, Whom the Father sent To spread abroad the
firmament: O mighty Spirit, by Thy might Save
all who take the eagle's flight, And keep them by Thy
watchful care From ev'ry peril in the air.

O trinity of love and power, Your children shield in
danger's hour; From rock and tempest, fire, and foe,
protect them wheresoe'r they go; Thus, evermore shall
rise to thee Glad praise from air and land and sea.

Marine Corps history was drilled in us. We had to recite
dates and names of famous Marines while standing in line

waiting for entrance into the chow hall for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Mostly we would recite the information as a platoon. Occasionally the Drill Instructor would call on an individual and if he got the answer wrong he would be punished with pushups.

One day while we were waiting our turn to enter the chow hall, a platoon of Women Marines (WM's) was marching toward our direction. Our Drill Instructor quickly called, "Platoon, attention! About face!" He had us turn around so that we would not see the women march by. Until then, I did not realize that there were WM's.

The United States Marine Corps has a rich and proud history serving this great nation. The following article, "Brief Marine History: Condensed from Reference Section, History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, January 2004" can be found at the website of the Marine Corps League #254 of White Plains, New York <http://www.mclwestchester.org/More/MarinesHymnHistory/tabid/95/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/235/Brief-History-of-the-United-States-Marine-Corps.aspx>:

On November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia passed a resolution, stating that "two Battalions of Marines be raised" for service as landing forces. With this resolution the Continental Marines were established marking the birth date of the United States Marine Corps. Serving on land and at sea, these first Marines distinguished themselves in a number of important operations, including their first amphibious raid into the Bahamas in 1776, under the command of Captain (later Major) Samuel Nicholas, Nicholas, the first commissioned officer in the Continental Marines,

remained the senior Marine officer until the end of the American Revolution and is considered to be the first Marine Commandant. The Treaty between England and the new American nation in Paris in April 1783 brought an end to the Revolutionary War and as the last of the Nations Warships were sold, the Continental Navy and Marines went out of existence.

Following the Revolutionary War and the formal re-establishment of the Marine Corps in July 1798, Marines saw action in the quasi-war with France, landed in Santo Domingo and took part in many operations against the Barbary pirates along the “Shores of Tripoli.” Marines participated in numerous naval operations during the War of 1812, as well as participating in the Defense of Washington at Bladensburg, Maryland. On another front, Marines fought along side Andrew Jackson during the defeat of the British at New Orleans. The decades following the War of 1812 saw the Marines protecting American interests around the world, in the Caribbean, at the Falkland Islands, Sumatra and off the coast of West Africa, and also close to home in the operations against the Seminole Indians in Florida.

During the Mexican War (1846-1848), Marines seized enemy seaports on both the Gulf of Mexico and along the Pacific coasts. A battalion of Marines joined General Scott’s Army At Pueblo and fought their way to the “Halls of Montezuma” near Mexico City. Marines also served ashore and afloat during the Civil War (1861-1865). Although most service was with the Navy, a battalion fought at Bull Run and other units saw action with the blockading naval squadrons and at Cape

Hatteras, New Orleans, Charleston, and Fort Fisher. The last third of the 19th century saw Marines making numerous landings throughout the world, especially in the Orient and in the Caribbean area.

Following the Spanish-American War (1898), in which Marines performed with valor in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, the Corps entered An era of expansion And professional development. It saw active service in the Philippine Insurrection (1900) and the Boxer Rebellion in China (1899-1901) and in numerous other nations, including Nicaragua, Cuba, Mexico, and Haiti.

In World War I the Marine Corps distinguished itself on the battlefields of France as the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines earned the title of “Devil Dogs” [Teufelhunden] for heroic action during June 1918 at Belleau Wood, Soissons, St. Michiel, Blanc Mont, and in the final Meuse-Argonne offensive. Marine Air, which dates from 1912, also began to become an active fighting Arm of the Corps and played a gallant part in the war effort as Marine pilots flew day recon and fighter missions over France and Belgium. More than 30,000 Marines had served in France during the War and about one-third were killed or wounded in six months of intense fighting.

During World War II the Marine Corps began to develop a war fighting doctrine, the equipment to implement it and the support organization needed to fight an amphibious war. The success of the amphibious doctrine sealed the future fate of the Corps as Marines fought their way

across the South Pacific and to the very shores of Japan. The battles fought and the high price paid with the lives of United States Marines on Guadalcanal, New Britain, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa wrote our history with the blood and guts of American Marines. By the end of the War, the Marine Corps had grown to include six divisions, five Air wings, and support troop strength in World War II peaking at 485,113. The War cost the Marines nearly 87,000 dead or wounded, with 82 Marines earning the Medal of Honor.

While Marine units took part in the post-War occupation of Japan and North China, innovative studies were undertaken at Marine Corps Schools Command, Quantico, VA that worked on attaining a ‘vertical envelopment’ capability for the Corps through the use of helicopters. Landing at Inchon, Korea near Seoul in 1950, Marines proved that the doctrine of amphibious assault WAS still viable and necessary. After the recapture of Seoul, the Marines advanced to the Chosin Reservoir only to see Chinese Communists enter the War. After years of offensives, counter offensives, seemingly endless trench Warfare, and occupation duty, the last Marine ground troops were withdrawn during March 1955. More than 25,000 Marines were killed or wounded during the Korean War.

In July 1958, A brigade-size force landed in Lebanon to restore order. During the Cuban Crisis in October 1962, a large amphibious force was marshaled in the waters off South Florida but not landed. In 1965, an amphibious

brigade of Marines landed in the Dominican Republic intervention to protect Americans and evacuate who wish to.

The landing of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Da Nang in 1965 marked the beginning of large-scale Marine involvement in Vietnam. By the summer 1968 after the enemy's February Tet Offensive, Marine Corps strength in Vietnam rose to a peak of approximately 85,000. New battles, Dewey Canyon, Meade River, Hue, Khe Sanh, Hill 881, Bold Mariner, were fought and won by Marines. Marine bases, like Marble Mountain, Da Nang, Chu Lai, Quang Tri, Dong Ha, Vandergrift, The Rock Pile, Phu Bai and Hill 55 were manned and defended. The Marines began to withdraw "with honor" in September 1969 as the South Vietnamese began to assume A larger role in fighting; the last ground forces were out of Vietnam in June 1971. The Vietnam War, in the history of the Marine Corps, exacted A high cost with over 13,000 Marines killed and more than 88,000 wounded. In the spring of 1975, Marines evacuated the embassy staff, other U.S. citizens, and refugees in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Saigon Republic of Vietnam. In May 1975, Marines played an integral roll in the rescue of the crew of the SS Mayaguez that had been captured off the coast of Cambodia.

The mid 1970s saw the Marine Corps Assume an increasingly significant role in the defending NATO's northern flank with units of the 2nd Marine Division who participated in joint War game operations throughout northern Europe. The Marine Corps Also played a key

role in the development of the Rapid Deployment Force, A multi-service organization created to insure a flexible and timely response around the world when needed. The Maritime Pre-positioning Ships (MPS) was developed to enhance this capability by pre-staging equipment needed for combat operations close to the vicinity of the designated area of operations to reduce response time as Marines trained to link up by air transportation with MPS assets.

The 1980s brought an increasing number of terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies around the world. Marine Security Guards, under the direction of the State Department, continued to conduct themselves with distinction in the face of this challenge. In August 1982, Marines landed in Beirut, Lebanon, as part of a multi-national peace-keeping force. For the next 19 months they faced the hazards of their mission with courage and professionalism. In October 1983 they took part in the highly successful, short-notice, intervention in Grenada. As the decade of the 1980s came to a close, Marines were called to respond to instability in Central America. In December 1989, at the head of the spear of Operation Just Cause in Panama Marines protected America interests and restored Panama's democratic process.

Less than a year later, in August 1990, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait set in motion events that would lead to the largest movement of Marine Corps forces since World War II. Between 1990 and January 1991, 24 infantry battalions, 40 squadrons, and more than 92 Marines support

units deployed to the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Desert Shield. Operation Desert Storm was launched 16 January 1991, the day the air campaign began. The main Attack overland began 24 February when the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions breached the Iraqi defense lines and stormed into occupied Kuwait. By the morning of February 25, 100,000 Iraqi troops had been neutralized as either killed or captured. Within 100 hours, the entire Iraqi Army in the Kuwait theater of operation had been encircled, with 4,000 tanks destroyed and 42 divisions destroyed or rendered operationally ineffective.

Overshadowed by the events in the Persian Gulf during 1990-91, were A number of other significant Marine deployments that again demonstrated the Corps' flexible and rapid response when the nation's leaders call. A new *nom guerre* was added to the lineage of the "Old Corps" with the term "America's 911 Force" describing these 21st century Marines. Among the several non-combatant evacuation operations supported by Marine units were operations in Liberia and Somalia and humanitarian lifesaving operations in Bangladesh, the Philippines, and northern Iraq. In December 1992 Marines landed in Somalia marking the beginning of a two year humanitarian relief operation in the famine-stricken and strife-torn nation. In another part of the world, Marine Corps Aircraft supported Operation Deny Flight in the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. In April 1994, Marines Again demonstrated their ability to protect Americans in remote parts of the world when A Marine task force evacuated U.S. citizens from Rwanda, responding to civil unrest in that country. Closer to home, Marines

went ashore in September 1994 in Haiti as part of the U.S. force participating in the restoration of democracy in that country. During this same period Marines were engaged in providing assistance to our Nation's counter-drug enforcement efforts, assisting in battling wild fires in the western United States, and aiding in flood and hurricane relief operations.

During the late 1990's, Marine Corps units deployed to several African nations, including the Central African Republic, Zaire, and Eritrea, in order to provide security and assistance in the evacuation of American citizens. During periods of political and civil instability in those countries, Humanitarian and disaster relief operations were also conducted by Marines during strife in Kenya, and in the Central American nations of Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. In 1999, Marine units deployed to Kosovo in support of Operation Allied Force. Soon After the September 2001 terrorist Attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. Marine units deployed to the Arabian Sea and in November 2001 set up a forward operating command in southern Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. This is traditionally marked as the beginning of the War on Terror. Within months, the Al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorist governments were history and 25 million Afghans were able to experience their first freedom in over 20 years.

When the President calls, the Marine Corps answers that call. After the question, "Where are the carriers?" the next query is often, "Send in the Marines!" On March

19, 2003 the president called and American and allied forces responded as they launched Operation Iraqi Freedom that in a matter of three weeks demolished the government of Saddam Hussein and his Baath political party. During the ensuing months, New York USMCR units [2nd Bn, 25th Mar (2/25), 8th Tank Bn, VMGR-452, 6th Comm, and 6th Comm Bn] with other Marine and allied American and foreign military forces have worked to rebuild the Iraqi infrastructure and to return the war-torn nation to the Iraqi people. Today, Marines continue to serve their nation in Iraq, Haiti, and countless other places. May God continue to Bless them and our Nation.

The Marine Corps has continued its tradition of innovation to meet the challenges of a century. The Marine Corps war fighting Laboratory was created in 1995 to evaluate and assess the impact of new technologies on war fighting, and expedite the introduction of modern capabilities into the operating forces of the Marine Corps. Exercises such as “Hunter-Killer”, and “Urban Warrior” were designed to explore future tactical concepts, and to examine military operations within urban settings.

Today’s Marine Corps stands ready to continue in the proud tradition of those Marines past who fought and died at Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir, and Khe Sanh, Kuwait, Najaf, and Nasiriyah. Continuing a long and proud heritage of faithful service to the nation, with the resolve to face tomorrow’s challenges will continue to keep the United States Marine Corps the “first to fight” and the “best of the best.”

Everyday we received classes on subjects such as Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and Instruction on practical things including how to make hospital corners on sheets and blankets on our bunks. Newly acquired information was practiced until everyone in the platoon could repeat it out-loud together.

To develop teamwork and discipline we spent hours on the Parade Deck learning, practicing and perfecting Close Order Drill. Drill Instructor barked rapid commands with expected instant obedience by 70 recruits in unison and without flaw. With every error committed by an individual, the entire platoon was punished with Mountain Climber, Push-up and Running-in-Place exercises. The Drill Instructor seemed to take it personal when someone made a mistake.

Close Combat Training, which was training in hand-to-hand fighting, was a time where we were taught several blows, strikes, tosses and kicks, all which ended with a final death blow.

Bayonet training entailed learning how to affix and remove the bayonet onto the M-16 rifle as well as how to use it effectively in the event we found ourselves without ammunition in combat. During training we aggressively simulated attacking an enemy while we gave loud exhaled war cries, "Yeht, Yeht, Yeht." These war cries were intended to help us exert more powerful and concentrated blows as well as make the enemy die from fright.

During the Assault Course we gained knowledge in the art of squad tactics. This is an area in which every Marine is trained

in so that no matter what his job will be in the Marine Corps he will know how to pick up his rifle and fulfill his role as a Basic Rifleman if the need arises.

Mail call was something that all recruits look forward to. It gives you the chance to hear from loved ones back home. It was a portal to a more sane life. Even mail call was a ritual used to instill discipline, respect and instant obedience to your superiors. When your name was called you were to yell out at the top of your lungs, "Sir. Here Sir." Then you were to run over to the drill instructor that was holding your mail and slap both hands together over the mail and yell, "Sir. Thank you Sir." One letter I received was from my mother. She naturally wrote to me in Spanish as she did not know or speak English. It read in part as follows:

Carlos my son how are you? Well, I am good. Yesterday I received your letter. Right away I am responding so that you can know about us...Concerning my tooth, I will tell you that I am already doing a little better, but I am not feeling good yet. You told me that they were going to take out two of your teeth. Have you done it yet? Do you understand well all that I write you? I understand your letters very well. I am very happy that you are going to church. That is very good. You are about to have been there a month. Time goes quickly. I am sending you the stamps. If you need more, send a note to your father and we will send some to you again. Have you gotten accustomed to your new glasses? How do you feel with them? Your Aunt Alicia is here. She is staying a month with your Aunt Mirta. They have received your letter. Enrique (Cesar) and Felix send you a strong embrace. They will write to you soon as well. Your father

is the same as always. Right now he is working here. You know that he never rests. He sends you a strong embrace as well. Write to me for it gives me much joy when I receive your letter. Take much care of yourself. Your mother, who loves you with all of her love, Martha

Drill instructors would often open mail in front of recruits searching for contraband. If something arrived that shouldn't have come, the recipient of the mail was in big trouble.

One morning we were awakened by some very excited Drill Instructors. They were saying that an Iraqi fighter jet had attacked one of our ships, the U.S.S. Stark, in the Persian Gulf. We were told that this was the real deal and why we were in training. Maybe President Regan would call us to a far away place to defend our country from aggressors. We had better get serious. Our Drill Instructors promised that they would do their best to prepare us for war.

Another time we were on a forced march. The forced 10-mile march, which for me would turn out to be a jog due to my short stature of 5 feet 6 inches, resulted in me being at the back of the 70-man platoon creating an accordion effect. A difficult situation became worse when the rain began. We were ordered to put on our ponchos, which was fine at first until it stopped raining and we didn't stop to remove them. Let me tell you it became sweltering under those ponchos.

Fire watch was a 1-hour job that was assigned and rotated at nighttime in our squad bay to perform security and watch duties while the others slept. This became an excellent time for me to pray and seek the Lord. I would often talk to God thanking

Him for getting me through the previous day and asking Him to carry me through the next day. The loss of sleep was well worth the spiritual growth that took place those nights.

It was our platoon's turn to perform Guard Duty at the base armory. This particular night it was my turn. I had my rifle and was given the order not to let anyone pass me and to report any suspicious activity. I remember marching around my assigned portion of the armory thinking to myself that I would have to be ready to challenge anyone who might dare come by me. "Halt who goes there?" I asked the oncoming dark silhouetted person. Thankfully it was my relief and I was able to get back to the squad bay for some much needed rest.

Swim qualification was a part of Marine Corps Boot Camp that I had not anticipated or even thought about. I did not know how to swim and was petrified when we were led to an inside swimming pool and ordered to jump into the pool wearing my woodland camouflage uniform. I quickly doggie paddled to the side of the pool and was yelled at by an angered Swimming Instructor. He told me that I had one week to get swim qualified, which entailed swimming in my woodland camouflage uniform (minus the boots) for 5 minutes without touching the sides of the pool, or that I would be sent home on the next bus with a shaved head. In the following week I was taught how to perform the breaststroke, the backstroke and the sidestroke. Upon being tested, I qualified with the minimal qualification, S-3. For my Military Occupational Specialty (M.O.S), Amphibian Assault Crewman, I would later need to become S-2 qualified or swim the three different strokes for 10 minutes without touching the side of the pool.

When we moved into the barracks at Weapons Battalion, things became noticeably calmer for us. Drill Instructors would back off and allow the Primary Marksmanship Instructor (PMI) take over to teach us the fine art of accurately firing the M-16 A2 rifle with deadly precision. One full week, known as “Grass week,” we spent “snapping in” or learning how to best position ourselves with our rifles for stability and increased accuracy when firing at a target. I had as a teenager learned to fire a rifle “southpaw” or left handed due to poor vision in my right eye. One day while practicing firing at an Able target, my PMI asked me if I had any relatives in the Marine Corps, to which I answered in the negative. The PMI then had me get up and meet his Sergeant Major, Sergeant Major Fonte. Sergeant Major looked me over and saw how I was firing less than excellent and stated, “He can’t be of any relations to me,” then walked away. I ended up qualifying with a Marksman Badge (commonly referred to as the “pizza box”), which is the lowest of the three badges (Sharp Shooter and Expert being the other two badges).

“You’ve got two minutes to get on the parade deck in platoon formation,” barked our junior Drill Instructor. Of course to move 70 men down from the second story of our barracks and be in formation in the correct order was an impossible feat and the Drill Instructor knew it. On our third attempt I looked back and began to holler, “Come on!” to help motivate my fellow recruits. While looking back I didn’t notice the Drill Instructor standing at the bottom of the stairway and I ran into him hard. He fell to the deck, naval terminology for ground, hard. Fear overcame me and I acted like I didn’t know what had happened and ran to my spot in the platoon formation. He came running over to me and hollered, “Hernandez. Gonzalez. Whatever your name is. I know you are Hispanic. Don’t think

I didn't know it was you. You will pay for that!" I never did receive the promised retribution. Maybe it was because he knew I was just trying to get some of the other guys behind me down to the parade deck faster.

Individual Combat Training (ICT) was a time when we got to go to Page Field and bivouac pitching our shelter halves with other Marines shelter halves for less than spacious sleeping quarters. It sure wasn't the Hilton, but it made do when a fellow was exhausted from a day's activities. It was during this time that we first got acquainted with MRE's (Meals-Ready-to-Eat), which I found delicious. Who would not love a dehydrated pork patty, just add water to reconstitute, or spaghetti and meatballs? We were taught to go for the main course first since that was where most of the calories were in case we did not have time to finish the remainder of the meal.

"You have 2 minutes to eat. Ready, go!" ordered Drill Instructor. Everyone quickly tore into their MRE and began eating the main course. No time to reconstitute those pork patties. Drill Instructor counted down in his typical fashion when trying to hurry and stress us out, "1 minute; 45 seconds; 20 seconds; you're done!" I do not think that counting is taught in drill instructor school as they all invariably skip most numbers when counting down.

At the gas chamber we were to learn that our gas masks are effective to prevent the wearer from succumbing to a potentially deadly chemical gas attack. "When we go inside the gas chamber we will stop in the middle. At that point listen for my instructions. When I tell you to remove your gas mask you will immediately reach out and place one arm on the shoulder

of the recruit in front of you and then proceed to remove the mask. Once all masks are off you will then follow the recruit in front of you in an orderly fashion out of the gas chamber,” coached the NBC (Nuclear Biological Chemical) Instructor. “If you drop your gas mask you will go back into the chamber again,” he warned.

Of course I dropped my mask and was approached by an irate Drill Instructor who had me get back in line to enter the chamber a second time. Several of the recruits were coming out vomiting from the noxious CS (tear) gas.

Other adventures ahead of us included the Infiltration Course, Amphibious and Helicopter Indoctrination, Rappelling from a 60-foot tower, Confidence Course, Monkey Bridge and Slide for Life.

After ICT we had the Senior Drill Instructor Inspection and Drill Competition to prepare for. Hours on the Parade Deck were spent to perfect our ability to march and complete the manual of arms in near perfect synchronization. Platoon 2052 won the Drill Competition. We did it and had the honor of taking the Trophy back for our Senior Drill Instructor, who would have bragging rights when he met with the other platoons’ Senior Drill Instructors.

A Pass In Review followed Final Inspection. We were cut checks for what was owed to us. Everyone was given orders to their next duty station. I was to report to the 4th Amphibian Assault Battalion, Headquarters and Service Company, AAV Platoon my reserve unit in Tampa, Florida. I would report for 3 drill weekends before reporting to the school at Camp Del

Mar, Camp Pendleton, in California for my MOS (Military Occupational Specialty), Amphibious Crew Member.

My Drill Instructor told me he could not understand why I would go through all this training and go into the reserves. He thought I was making a mistake and let me know of his disapproval. Even in this matter God was in control. We graduated on July 29th, 1987 and had now earned the title of United States Marine. The Navy chaplain told us that we were stepping out of our own little personal histories into the history of the world. I did not realize at time how those words would become reality for me. God's grace had kept me both spiritually and physically through rigorous training. He was preparing me for a rendezvous with history

***Camp Del Mar, California — Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV) Schools Battalion
October to December 1987***

A layover in Denver was necessary as I was on my way to Camp Pendleton, California for my Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) training. My recruiter had come through in his promise to get me amtracks. The designation of 1833 would be my MOS, which is an Amphibian Assault Vehicle Crewman. When I arrived at Camp Pendleton I processed in and was taken to Camp Del Mar where I was placed in a platoon awaiting to begin classes to learn how to operate the tracked 26-ton amphibious landing vehicle, the Marines workhorse in amphibious landings.

Our instructor was a gunnery sergeant that loved to run (gunnery sergeants in the Corps are affectionately referred to as

Gunny). One morning he took us on a 7-mile run. Ouch. I had never run so far and did not think that I could do it. Gunny was determined to teach us all we needed to know about amtracks to enter the Fleet with enough knowledge to be able to perform our jobs competently.

While laying in my bunk listening to some music, I felt a slight tremor. We were told that what we had felt was a small earthquake. I spent a lot of time praying and seeking God's direction in my life during the 2 months that I spent in amtrack school.

We learned that there were three versions of the 26 ton tracked landing vehicles or AAV's, the AAVP7A1 (the "P" designating it as a Personnel/Cargo carrier vehicle for amphibious landings and troop or cargo transport for up to 26 combat-loaded Marines or 10,000 pounds of cargo), the AAVC7A1 (the "C" designating it as a Command vehicle utilized as a mobile command post) and the AAVR7A1 (the "R" designating it as a Recovery vehicle utilized as a mobile maintenance and recovery vehicle with a hydraulic telescopic boom type crane with a lifting capacity of 6000 pounds and a recovery winch with a maximum of 30,000 pounds load capacity). The AAV was formally known as the LVT or Landing Vehicle Tracked, which I learned was the preferred terminology by old trackers, as it clearly designated the vehicle as having tracks and not wheels.

At the range we were learning to fire from the turret (known as the 40/50 UpGunned Weapons Station) of the AAVP7A1. There were two guns that we were able to fire from within the turret offering protection from small arms fire, a .50 caliber heavy machine and a 40 mm machine gun which fires high

explosive grenade rounds at machine gun rates. The AAVC7A1 and the AAVR7A1 do not have a weapon station, but rather have the ability to mount the M-60D M.G. (Machine Gun) with a free moving pintle, which fires the 7.62 mm round, on the outside of the crew chief's or gunner's hatch. This exposes the gunner, as he must sit approximately chest high out of the vehicle to reach and fire the M-60 machine gun.

Firing the 40 mm machine gun was exciting. My target was an old Jeep on the side of a hill. The high explosive rounds left the barrel with a "thump" and impacted its target with a "boom" sending debris from the target flying into the air in all directions.

Other classes included mission of the AAV, vehicle maintenance, radio communication, tactical driving and history of the AAV. Classes were fast paced and very interesting.

One evening I came across a Marine who was in my class. He was playing cards by himself with a strange looking deck of cards. I asked him what he was doing and he told me that he was playing with Tarot cards. He bluntly told me that he worshiped the Devil. I asked him, as he was Puerto Rican, "How does a fellow Hispanic come to worship the Devil. Come on. Where did you pick this up?" He informed me that it was his parents who taught him. I was astonished that his parents had actually led him into such idolatry. Truly God's Shadow was my abode. I look back at how pitiful this Marine's life was. He never stood a chance growing up with parents who willingly taught their son such wickedness.

By contrast, another Marine seemed to know God. He told me that he often read his Bible. One day at the ramp, the place

where the amtracks are parked in neat rows as their crews maintain them, one of our ramp instructors told us that he got saved. He was born again. I was excited for him and became disheartened when I heard others say that the newly saved Marine had “gone off the deep end.”

Graduation from Amphibian Assault Vehicle Crewman School was upon us. I now had earned my MOS and was going back to my unit as an 1833 amtracker. Oorah! Eight weeks had gone by very quickly. As an amtracker I would join the ranks of America’s finest who had trained in the art of amphibious warfare. Being an AAV crewman would be my specialty during my Marine Corps career. I had wanted and got Combat Arms, which was a group of MOS’s that was limited to men only due to the combat nature of such jobs. I did not choose the infantry in part due to the fact that I preferred to drive into combat. We were given our certificates to show that we had successfully completed coursework and learned all the needed skills to enter the Fleet as basic amtrack crewmen. My certificate reads:

United States Marine Corps
This is to certify that
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS CARLOS A. FONTE SSN#/1833
USMC
has completed the course prescribed by the
THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
for
ASSAULT AMPHIBIAN CREWMAN
Schools Battalion, Marine Corps Base
Camp Pendleton, California 92055
this 23rd Day of December 1987
[Signed]
Major USMC
Commanding

2

LINE IN THE SAND: SNARE OF THE FOWLER

I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the SNARE OF THE FOWLER, and from the noisome pestilence

“Snare of the Fowler”

Oh fool, it is you Satan seeks to ensnare,
The hunter will not for a moment rest;
Run to Jehovah before it is too late if you care,
For the beast seeks to destroy you as his quest.

Feel his hot breath on the back of your neck,
Your heart pounds with fear;
Speedily fly to God and never look back to check;
Hasten not lest you meet the predator’s spear.

Quickly leap now and take to flight,
Do not waste another twinkle of the eye;
It is Jesus who will make it right,
Fly now into His arms; “Save me Jesus” make your cry!

Weekend Drills

“Don’t forget to check the hull plugs,” the Sergeant reminded me. The pre-operation checklist for water operations included

ensuring that the hull plugs were in place; if they were not in place the amtrack would likely sink fast. We were getting ready to go into the Tampa Bay for a water-borne operation. Our mission was to go under the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and take part in an amphibious landing on Egmont Key to assist in cleaning up the island. Our Instructor and Inspector (I&I) staff, who were active duty Marines, helped with the maintenance of the amtracks during the month when we were not there.

One drill weekend we took part in the Toys for Tots program by going to a Tampa Bay Buccaneers football game in our Alpha uniforms. We were assigned children whom we would assist at the 50-yard line cheering them on at half time as they were to race against the clock filling their wagons with toys.

At times we had three-day drill weekends and had to report at our reserve center on Friday. Usually on these extended drill weekends we traveled to Camp Blanding in north Florida near Stark, Florida. Our amtracks were shipped ahead of us on lowboy flatbed trailers pulled by semi-trucks. We often spent a day firing our .50 caliber machine guns. On a few occasions a small brush fire would be accidentally started from the heat and sparks produced by our machine guns firing at rapid rates. A cease-fire would be called and the fire would be put out so that we could resume firing our weapons.

Often drill weekends were spent on the ramp checking over our hogs performing mundane preoperational checks and preventative maintenance tasks. Whenever a new amtracker came to our unit we would invariably welcome him by having him go for non-existent items, such as a can of beep for the horn. During chow time several of the Marines would get together to play an intense game of basketball.

***Summer Camp—Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Corps Base,
California
June 1988***

“Do you want to go with us to Vegas?” asked Staff Sergeant. We had liberty that weekend and some of the guys were planning to go party. I was not the partying type. I opted out of that endeavor. I preferred to enjoy God’s creation. The Mojave Desert was beautiful at night. Marine Corps Base Twenty-Nine Palms, or Stumps as it was often referred to, was hot. This desert training would prove very useful for the coming storm.

***Summer Camp — Camp Lejuene Marine Corps Base, North
Carolina
June 1989***

“Look up not down into the swells,” Staff Sergeant instructed, “or you may fall off. Make sure you keep low and maintain your sea legs. Roll with the waves. When the disabled (am) track is even with you, then toss them the line.” The swells on Onslow Beach that day were as high as 8 feet. I looked down at the amtracker as his track went down with the swell and as his track came back up, I tossed him the line, which he caught and proceeded to tie to the aft (Naval terminology for rear) mooring cleats. Once the rope was secured to the simulated disabled track it was ready to be towed.

We got to throw live hand grenades. This was a great experience since my platoon in boot camp at Parris Island only threw practice grenades. At the time we were told that a recruit had accidentally blown himself up along with a drill instructor after

apparently “milking” the grenade. We were not old when this incident occurred, but ever since live explosive grenades were not utilized at Parris Island.

Summer Camp — Fort Pickett, Virginia

June 1990

“Fonte you took that turn to sharp. You nearly threw a track. That could be disastrous in combat. You need to take more choppy turns,” Gunny lectured. Although I did not throw the track, the track needed to be adjusted. “Aye, Aye, Gunny. Sorry about that,” I responded. The numerous tank trails at Fort Pickett allowed for excellent training in maneuvering our amtracks.

Baghdad, Iraq

August 2, 1990

Breaking news came on the television interrupting all shows. President George Herbert Walker Bush told the nation that Saddam Hussein had invaded his smaller neighbor Kuwait and declared it part of Iraq. To make matters worse Iraqi troops now line up on the Saudi Arabian border posturing for a possible invasion of King Fahd’s kingdom. The United States and indeed the world could not allow this to happen. The President informed the nation that U.S. troops were being sent to stop any possible invasion of Saudi Arabia and that we would work closely with our allies to come up with a plan to expel Saddam from Kuwait.

The following is part of National Security Directive 45 given by President Bush, National Security Archive, Electronic Briefing Book, Edited by Jeffrey T. Richelson, January 17,

2001, that was at the time of origination secret and can be found at the following website: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/>:

~~SECRET~~ UNCLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 20, 1990

National Security Directive 45

. . .

On Thursday, August 2, 1990 the government of Iraq, without provocation or warning, invaded and occupied the State of Kuwait, thereby placing these vital U.S. interests at risk. Four principles will guide U.S. policy during this crisis:

— the immediate complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait

—the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government to replace the puppet regime installed by Iraq

—a commitment to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf; and,

—the protection of the lives of American citizens abroad.

To meet these principles and to bring the crisis to an immediate, peaceful, and just end, I hereby direct that the following diplomatic, economic, energy and military measures be undertaken.

...

Military

To protect U.S. interests in the Gulf and response to requests from the King of Saudi Arabia and the Amir of Kuwait, I have ordered U.S. military forces deployed to the region for two purposes: to deter and, if necessary, defend Saudi Arabia and other friendly states in the Gulf region from further Iraqi aggression; and to enforce the mandatory Chapter 7 sanctions under Article 51 of the UN charter and the UNSC Resolutions 660 and 661. U.S. forces will work together with those of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries to preserve their national integrity and to deter further Iraqi aggression. Through their presence, as well as through training exercises, these multinational forces will enhance the overall capability of Saudi Arabia and other regional states to defend themselves.

I also approve U.S. participation, in conjunction with the forces of other friendly governments, in two separate multinational forces that would provide for the defense of Saudi Arabia and enforce the UN mandated sanctions. These two groups will be called the Multinational Force for Saudi Arabia (MNFSA) and the Multinational Force to enforce sanctions (MNFES) against Iraq and Kuwait. The United States should coordinate closely with the

Saudis, the Kuwaitis and others on the composition and organization of these forces.

...

{George Bush}

A couple of months after these troubling events I finally earned the rank of Corporal. Getting promotions as an am-tracker is difficult as there are only so many billets available. For amtrackers the rank of Corporal opens up the opportunity of becoming the crewchief/gunner on the amtrack. In October of 1990 I was promoted to the rank of Corporal, which is the first rank of becoming a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO). NCO's in the Marine Corps are authorized to wear the red blood stripe on the Marine Corps Dress Blue uniforms. The NCO sword is also authorized as an official issue once a Marine reaches the rank of Corporal. My promotion certificate reads:

To all who shall see these presents, greetings:
Know Ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the
fidelity and

abilities CARLOS A. FONTE SSN#, I do
appoint this Marine a CORPORAL in the

RESERVE OF THE

United States Marine Corps

To rank as such from the FIRST day of OCTOBER,
nineteen hundred and NINETY

This appointee will therefore carefully and diligently
discharge the duties of the grade to which appointed by
doing and performing all manner of things thereunto
pertaining. And I do strictly charge and require all per-

sonnel of lesser grade to render obedience to appropriate orders. And this appointee is to observe and follow such orders and directions as may be given from time to time by Superiors acting according to the rules and articles governing the discipline of the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

Given under my hand at HQSVCCo 4th Assault
Amphibian Bn Tampa FL
This First day of OCTOBER in the year of our Lord
nineteen Hundred and ninety.

AUTHORITY Mcbul 1430 of 31 August 1990
[Signature]

DATE OF PROMOTION 1 October 1990
Captain

This appointment is effective for

Captain, USMCR
pay and allowances on 1 October 1990.

Commanding

3

CALL TO DUTY: UNDER HIS WINGS

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and UNDER HIS WINGS shalt thou trust:

“Under His Wings”

Oh ye who are His, shed not a single tear,
Sweet Jesus now covers you with His Wings;
No evil can even think to come near,
His love is yours with all that it brings.

Crowns, Mansions Peace and love,
And to worship the King, oh what a joy it is!
They all, you see come from above,
For those who accept Jesus and are His!
Sweet is the place where evil will no longer trod,
Before we only knew danger and strife;
Worthy and Awesome is the Lamb of God
Under His wings we now find safety and life!

The call
October 1990

“It’s for you,” I was told. My heart pounded with excitement. I new it was the call we had been expecting. All that we had been training for was about to be tested.

“Corporal Fonte?” asked the caller. It was Staff Sergeant.

“Yes Staff Sergeant,” I replied.

“It’s official. We are being activated. You are to report to the Reserve Unit for active duty by November 27th.”

“Aye, Aye, Staff Sergeant,” I replied my heart still racing.

We were given our orders for Extended Active Duty (EAD), which read in part:

United States Marine Corps
HqSvcCo, 4thAsltPhibBn, FMF, USMCR
. . . Tampa, FL

1326
ADMIN
19 NOV 90

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CG, 4th MarDiv EAD
orders dtg 181925Z NOV 90

. . .

SECOND ENDORSEMENT

From: Commanding Officer

To: Personnel listed on Enclosure (1)

Subj: ORDERS TO EXTENDED ACTIVE DUTY FOR
A PERIOD OF 180 DAYS

Encl: (1) Roster of individuals to Whom These Orders
are addressed

Instructions for Marine Corps Reservists ordered to
Active Duty

1. Any advance mobilization orders previously given to you are hereby cancelled.
2. You are hereby directed to report by 0730, 27 NOV 90 to this Training Center for processing for activation. In accordance with the instructions contained in paragraph 1 of the basic orders at 0001 on 29 November 1990, you are ordered to involuntary extended active duty for a period of 180 days. Anticipate extension of this period to 360 days. Travel to the training center will be performed at personal expense subject to reimbursement.
3. This countersigned copy constitutes original orders.

{Signed by Captain}

***H&S Company, 4th AAV Battalion, Tampa Reserve Unit,
Florida***

November 1990

The Instructor Inspector (I&I) staff personnel were briefing us about what the future may hold for us. Our I&I Gunny told me, "Who knows Corporal Fonte. You may come back outranking me. Sometimes battlefield promotions come quickly." Our office clerks were busy. We had to update all our personnel files, complete last will and testaments, fill out pay disbursement forms and get shots in preparation for deployment. One shot in particular that I remember was the anthrax vaccine. It

was experimental, but was supposed to help us in the event that Saddam utilized anthrax against us. Saddam had used chemical weapons in the past and a real concern was that he would do so again against American forces — us. Wives, children, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers hovered around their Marine as the process continued.

Once all the clerical work was complete, we got into our company formation. I was in the AAV platoon. Our company commander told us to look to our right and to our left. One of the two marines we were seeing may not come back alive. He told us that as many as 50% casualties may occur. Then we were dismissed and told to load up the buses. A local news station in Tampa, Channel 13 News, was capturing video footage of our unit as we made our preparations to leave Tampa. They would follow us into the desert to report on how our Tampa Reserve Unit would fit into the impending conflict with Iraq. Families and their Marine cried as they said their last farewells until who knows when. We boarded the buses to commence our rendezvous with destiny. It was a heart wrenching moment as we were seemingly ripped away from all we knew, not even sure if we would ever see those whom we loved the most again.

While on the bus we were each given two dog tags (small metal identification tags that informs the reader your name, religious preference, blood type and gas mask size). We were instructed to place one of the dog tags on our beaded necklace. The other dog tag was to be placed in our bootlace by partially unlacing one of our combat boots and running the lace through the tag. This would allow, we were informed, quick identification in the event we were decapitated in combat. I placed my second dog tag in my left bootlace.

Camp Lejuene, North Carolina

November 1990

“Marines, many of you are wondering how long will you be gone. Let me tell you what I told a private who recently asked me that very question. This is not Vietnam. There will be no tours. You will be over there as long as it takes. And if something else comes up in the world afterwards, you will go there too,” the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Alfred M. Gray, told us in a slow cadenced speech as we stood at Parade Rest. I heard that there were around 20,000 Marines there, which was the largest standing formation since World War II, listening to the Commandant’s speech that day. General Gray was a four star general who had been a private at one point in his Marine Corps past. He is the only Commandant of the Marine Corps whose official Marine Corps picture is one where he is wearing his battle fatigues, which fittingly is the desert camouflage battle dress uniform.

Clipper Flight

December 1990

“Can I get you anything?” asked the stewardess. “No thank you,” I replied. The flight crew was being very friendly and supportive of our upcoming mission. Patriotism was high in those days. Lee Greenwood’s song “God Bless The USA” was popular. A movie was playing as we were traveling toward our destiny in the sandbox, as the theatre of operations in Southwest Asia (SWA) was nicknamed. I wasn’t much interested in the movie. I do not even remember what it was about. Reading a book and deep in thought and prayer, I began to feel myself feeling sleepy. Holding tightly to my M-16 rifle I fell asleep.

“We will be landing in Rome shortly. No one will get off of the plane. An Italian crew will board as we get refueled to check things out and to give the plane a once over,” instructed Gunny. I asked one of the Italian men who boarded if he cared to trade some money. He gave me a Lira and I thanked him. How strange it must have been for him to board a large plane full of Marines, approximately 176 men in all, carrying weapons.

“Good luck. We’ll pray for you,” the stewardess told us all as we unloaded from the plane. I could tell that she was sincere in her well wishes. No one knew for sure what lay ahead for us, but everyone seemed sure that we were going to go through an impending potentially devastating storm. The drumbeat for war was sounding ominously loud and was quickening in tempo. We got off that plane and entered the sandbox. It was December 15th.

A few buses with Saudi drivers were ready to pick us up and take us to our camp, Camp 15, which was a compound that had been temporarily deserted by western oil well workers to make room for U.S. Marine forces. The camp was quickly becoming a tent city with large GP (General Purpose) military tents being erected as quickly as troops poured in from the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions. Over 80,000 Marines were now in the theater of operations. President Bush, who was allowing the Generals to run the preparation for war, had ordered a massive build up of troops.

Looking out of the bus, I saw an occasional camel wandering in the fine desert sand without an apparent human owner. There were sand dunes as large as small hills that filled the landscape.

The sand appeared to me to be similar in color and texture to what we called in Florida sugar sand. We are in the desert wilderness. Did I just see what I think I saw? Is that a donkey, a wild donkey roaming the desert without a person anywhere in sight? The scene outside of my window on the bus is surreal. It is as if I were watching a movie. Welcome to the Arabian Desert. I am under God's wings, his protection. I purposed in my heart that I would rest in Him and trust his Mighty Hand.

4

DESERT SHIELD: SHIELD AND BUCKLER

His truth shall be thy SHIELD AND BUCKLER

“Shield and Buckler”

War drums pounding in the night air,
Visions of impending destruction and death;
The archers with their arrows begin to prepare,
Call to your Savior with all your breath!

Machinery of all kinds are churning the ground,
From the melting sun your enemy seeks relief;
Marching toward the target which they have found,
Fear not so long as Christ is the center of your belief.

Closer they come seeking your demise,
Their goal is your death in the battlefield;
Relying on man’s capabilities is not wise,
Remember it is Jesus who is your shield!

Camp 15, Saudi Arabia
December 15, 1990

A Marine, who had been at Camp 15 for some time now,
informed us that we had just missed General H. Norman

Schwarzkopf, Commander of U.S. Central Command, as he had recently visited Camp 15. Central Command is responsible for planning and overseeing military operations in the Middle East. General Schwarzkopf had left MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida to set up his Command Center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia so that he could be close to the troops that he would oversee in the theater of operations.

General Schwarzkopf would report directly to General Colin L. Powell, who was the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. who would then relay the information directly to the President of the United States. Other national leadership included the Secretary of Defense, Richard (Dick) B. Cheney, who later became Vice President of the United States after winning in a contentious bid for the presidency as the number two man on the ticket with George W. Bush, the son of President George Herbert Walker Bush, on Election Day 2000.

We were feeling the effects of jet lag and had a terrible time staying awake as we set up our GP tents and cots to sleep on. This would be our home at least until we moved out from Camp 15 toward the Kuwaiti border. We saw the news reporter from Channel 13 News coming our way and decided to look busy so we began to fill some sandbags using our e-tool (entrenching shovel).

On camera he asked several of us a variety of questions. He asked a Corporal friend of mine, "How old are you?"

He replied, "I'm twenty-two years old."

"Twenty-two years old. Did you ever expect to see a war in your lifetime?" further questioned the reporter.

“No I never did. I never did. I took it day by day. Um. It’s hard to say. No body ever looks at death. You overlook death. The main thing here is survival. You try to stay alive and just go with it as it comes,” answered Corporal.

He next asked Sergeant, “What’s Saddam Hussein going to do?”

Sergeant answered, “Um. Probably, probably dig real deep and get real low down in Baghdad because we’ve got something for him.”

Our corpsman (a Navy medic assigned to Marine units for medical treatment), responded to one of the reporters questions, “No one wants war. But if it’s for freedom, for anybody in the world, and if it’s necessary, then we have to do what we have to do.”

The reporter from Channel 13 News asked me, “What did you do before you were out here and how has your life changed?”

I replied, “I worked at Winn-Dixie in Sarasota, and uh basically it’s about the same as far as pay and all that. So it hasn’t changed too much.” My few seconds of fame on the news was surely found to be humorous back home. At least family back home could get a glimpse of me thousands of miles away and know that I was doing fine.

We were issued two sets of desert camouflage uniforms each with one pair of desert boots. Upon receiving my issued desert

clothing I was told that they did not have anything in my size and that I would be given the closest thing to my size until the correct sizes came in. Desert camouflage pack covers were utilized to place over our M-16 rifle, which we always kept with us slung over our shoulders, to keep sand from entering the rifle. Gas masks were issued to all personnel and we were expected to carry them at all times. We were also issued night camouflage ponchos to help break our silhouette as we walked in the dark.

“Be careful when crossing that heavily traveled path. A Marine was accidentally hit and killed by a 5-ton truck,” we were cautioned. Later, we were instructed that ammo had not been issued for our M-16 rifles due to a Marine having been killed when another Marine had dropped his loaded weapon and it discharged striking the unfortunate Marine in the head. One never knows if the rumor “mill” was in overtime manufacturing incidents or if these stories were true or half true. Needless to say we were reminded of the importance weapons safety.

We were told to travel from the ramp in the sand, where we worked on our amtracks to perform operational checks and preventative maintenance, to the main compound to eat meals in small groups to avoid mass casualties in the event we were to come under attack.

“Hey Marines. Let us buy you some Near Beer (non-alcoholic beer as alcohol is illegal to possess or sell in Saudi Arabia),” a British soldier said in a heavy British accent, which I found difficult to understand. We talked about common concerns and agreed that we were all fortunate to have each other’s country involved in this showdown with Iraq’s crazy leader.

At Camp 15 there was only one open shop and a Saudi national ran it. We went to see what he was selling. He asked me with a heavy accent and poor English, "You want to buy a good camel saddle? I give it to you for 100 dollars. It is a fine saddle."

"No thank you," I replied. "I have no need for a camel saddle."

The persistent seller said, "You can buy for souvenir."

I opted not to make that purchase, but decided to ask him if he would trade some money from Saudi Arabia, which he happily obliged. I told him that I had a five-dollar bill and asked if he could exchange it for Saudi money. He gave me five riyals as an even trade. I did not pursue having him give me more. I didn't mind that he made a profit in our money exchange.

Sandstorms were common and often came unexpectedly. I had a bandana and AAV crew goggles, which I quickly put on when a sandstorm hit us. One day we were told that we needed to remain vigilant due to a Saudi national had been seen scooping out our camp and that he had made detailed drawings of our locations. The authorities were unsure if this man had given this information to someone who may seek to harm us. I never knew what became of that man.

Christmas

December 25, 1990

We have been given the day off today for Christmas. That morning I remember laying on my cot and a Colonel came

walking through our GP tent. Several of us started to come to attention and he waved and said to us not to come to attention as it was Christmas Day and he just wanted to swing by and wish us a Merry Christmas. I am not sure who he was.

Most of us are going to the compound's only pay phones to stand in a line so that we can make a call back home. I waited approximately 8 hours before I had a turn to call home.

Another corporal and myself decided were going to try and find some desert critters. Others had found scorpions and we were on the hunt for wild dogs or snakes. We were sure we had heard dogs howling at night and believe we may have come across a snake trail in the sand. Our adventure was fruitless but nonetheless fun.

Early on we were given desert camouflage New Testament Bibles in a modern English version. Corporal, the same Marine whom I went on a "hunt" with, read a passage from the Bible. He was pleasantly surprised at the ease of which he understood the passage he had just read. He smiled and commented, "Wow. I can understand this."

One day we had gone out for training and we stopped for the night. We saw in the distance a line of camels coming toward us. We all stood there watching these impressive creatures slowly marching through the desert sand. The leading camel was tall and old. Watching these amazingly created creatures slowly near us reminded me of a Star Wars science fiction movie or pages from a National Geographic magazine.

The LORD kept me this day again. He is faithful even

when I fail Him. He truly is my Shield and Buckler. A buckler is defined by Noah Webster (Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary of American English) as follows:

BUCK'LER, n. A kind of shield, or piece of defensive armor, anciently used in war. It was composed of wood, or wickers woven together, covered with skin or leather, fortified with plates of brass or other metal, and worn on the left arm. On the middle was an umbo, boss or prominence, very useful in causing stones and darts to glance off. The buckler often was four feet long, and covered the whole body.

I am thankful that God, as my Shield and Buckler, has "blocked" multiple spiritual attacks aimed me. The enemy seeks to bring fear and frustration to God's people.

Today we had a Worship Service in the desert in a GP (General Purpose) Tent. With the sand as our carpet and pews, we listened intently as the Navy Chaplain enthusiastically stated that this service was special in that we were near the cradle of civilization. We were not far from the Euphrates River (one of four river heads that flowed from Eden) and Ur (where the LORD had brought Abram out of). In the service prayers for protection and success in battle if it came down to it were offered.

The battle was nearing. Our leaders had drawn a line in the sand and there was no turning back now. Decisions that would personally affect me had been made. The following is part of National Security Directive 45 given by President Bush, National Security Archive, Electronic Briefing Book, Edited by Jeffrey T. Richelson, January 17, 2001, that was at the time

top secret and can be found at the following website: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/>:

~~TOP SECRET-UNCLASSIFIED~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 15, 1991

National Security Directive 54

. . .

2. Pursuant to my responsibilities and authority under the Constitution as President and Commander Chief, and under the laws and treaties of the United States, and pursuant to H. J. Res. 77 (1991), and in accordance with the rights and obligations of the United States under international law, including UN Security Council Resolutions 660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 674, 677, and 678, and consistent with the inherent right of collective self-defense affirmed in Article 51 of the of the United Nations Charter, I hereby authorize military actions designed to bring about Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. These actions are to be conducted against Iraq and Iraqi forces in Kuwait by U.S. air, sea and land conventional military forces, in coordination with the forces of our coalition partners, at a date and time I shall determine and communicate through National

Command Authority channels. This authorization is for the following purposes:

to effect the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait; to restore Kuwait's legitimate government; to protect the lives of American citizens abroad; and to promote the security and the stability of the Persian Gulf

. . .

{George Bush}

5

DESERT STORM: TERROR BY NIGHT

Thou shalt not be afraid for the TERROR BY NIGHT; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

“Terror by Night”

Corpses fallen are before you and at your sides,
Darkness came and the struggle for life has begun;
Their blood ebbs and flows with the tides,
Nearer still to One, make sure you do not shun.

Evils shrieks are carried by a wind so cold,
The Earth belches with black smoke;
Thunderous guns spew death amongst young and old,
His protection and love Satan cannot choke.

The dragon seeks to bring you terror by night,
While streaks of his red fire rip though the night sky;
In all of this there is still some good news, yes some light,
Fear not dear Christian for you will not ultimately die!

***Saudi Arabia/Kuwait
January/February, 1991***

My Journal

I decided to keep a vehicle log or running journal of any important things that may have happened and wrote it in a pocket spiral notepad. At the top of the page I had a replica of the drawing I had drawn on the outside of my amtrack, a wild boar hog with cutters and smoke coming out of its snout. The notes were in three columns per page — Date, Remarks/Malfunctions and Vehicle Was—either Operational (OPER.) or Inoperable (INOP.). There were 49 days or entries in all. These entries were made between January 15, 1991 and March 6, 1991.

Journal entry:

15 JAN 91 Vehicle accepted 2nd AAV Bn, H&S Co. Operation Desert Shield CBR unit inop., personnel heater inop. OPER.

Lance Corporal and myself received our assigned vehicle. We were part of the 2nd Amphibian Assault Battalion, H&S Company. Our vehicle was a command vehicle, an AAVC7A1, and we did our best to take inventory of what equipment was missing and to figure out what if anything needed fixing. On first inspection it was noted that the vehicle still had its woodland camouflage paint and would need to be painted a desert sand color. I also noticed that our camouflage netting to cover the vehicle with was also woodland camouflage, which was useless

in the desert. Next, I tried out our CBR (Chemical Biological Radiological) Unit and learned that it was not working. I felt that this was serious problem as we had been told that we would likely be attacked with chemical or biological agents since Iraq had deployed gas as a weapon in the past. We also learned that our personnel heater did not work, which I noted on our inventory list as well.

I watched as a Marine took out his bayonet and began drawing in the sand. "What are you drawing?" I asked. He told me that he was drawing a plane. When he completed his drawing he jumped on it and said he was going home. I laughed at the Marine and told him that we needed to make the best out of the situation we found ourselves in.

Journal entry:

16 JAN 91 Op. Desert Storm, odometer inop., miles unknown, attached to 8th Tanks Alpha Command, Starboard cargo hatch spring needs welded OPER.

We continued to find items that required attention. Since the odometer was not working, I was unable to maintain an accurate miles log. Our starboard (Naval terminology for right) cargo hatch spring was broken. The cargo hatch is very heavy and would not be able to be opened without first having it welded.

I was told that I was now the crew chief of an AAVC7A1 and that Lance Corporal would be my driver. There were not enough amtrackers to give us an assistant driver. Our AAVC7A1 had been chosen along with a second AAVC7A1 to be part of the Marines 8th Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division (a reserve tank battalion with 3 companies of the M-60 tanks, which was

augmented with regular active duty Marines). When Marine reserve units are not activated or called up, they are part of the 4th Marine Division, but since 8th Tank Battalion had indeed been activated it became part of the 2nd Marine Division. We were told to get ready to move out and to follow our HMMWV (nicknamed Humvee, which is the vehicle which had replaced the Jeep in the military) escort, who would lead us to our new unit.

Upon arriving at 8th Tank Battalion, I was told to report to the battalion Sergeant Major's tent. I walked into his tent to report and he told me that I was now Alpha Command and would be carrying the battalion commander in my track.

"I noticed that you still have a woodland camouflage vehicle netting. You had better get rid of it and find a desert camouflage net. I am not going to have my Lieutenant Colonel riding on a vehicle with woodland camouflage netting," ordered Sergeant Major.

"Aye, Aye, Sergeant Major. Sergeant Major, do you have any desert camouflage netting in your supply depot?" I asked.

"No, but you had better find one. I don't care how you do it, but get one."

Lance Corporal and I searched when I noticed approximately 5 desert camouflage vehicle nets lying in the sand. Some of the Tanks were out on maneuvers and left behind their nets. I told Lance Corporal that we were going to trade our green woodland camouflage net for one of these. We made the switch and I decided that we would need tie straps as well. I knew that the

green woodland camouflage nets would be useless for the tankers, so I went ahead and cut some of that netting to make straps. I do not know why no one ever came looking for their desert camouflage net or why the Sergeant Major never questioned how I had obtained the desert camouflage net. Nonetheless, we had the net, which we were ordered to get.

We were now part of the Alpha Command. Our AAVC7A1 was to carry 8th Tank's battalion commander, a Lieutenant Colonel. From our vehicle Battalion Commander would coordinate battalion activities and actions. We effectively became a mobile command post.

A second AAVC7A1 would be utilized for the Bravo Command which would carry the Battalion Executive Officer, the second in command of 8th Tank Battalion, who was also a Lieutenant Colonel. Bravo Command was needed in the event that either a 2-prong attack was necessary or if the Alpha Command was incapacitated or destroyed. Reality sank in. The AAVC7A1 was an obvious command and control vehicle as it would be the only vehicle among tanks and HMMWV's (Humvees) that had multiple whip antennae. We would become a prize target in order to knock out the command element in an attempt to bring about chaos to the battalion.

The next morning on January 16th we awoke to the news that the "air war" had begun. Long-range bombers, including B-52's, were bombing Baghdad and other strategic targets throughout Iraq and Kuwait. We were excited to hear that the liberation of Kuwait had begun because we knew and had been told that the only way home for us was through Kuwait.

We heard that in response to our air attack on Baghdad and other Iraqi targets, Iraq had fired upon Israel using Soviet made Scud missiles. Several of us had discussed the concern that we shared that if Israel was to enter into the conflict, we would suddenly find ourselves in an uneasy position of having Arab troops around us that would no longer support our mission. I thought to myself that I would not blame Israel for retaliating for these attacks or for defending herself from further future attacks.

It appears that Israel is staying out of this war for now allowing the United States to defend her. I suppose that this is the best outcome since we certainly would face outrage from our Arab partners in the Coalition of Nations that President Bush has built to eject Iraq from Kuwait. God is in control!

Journal entry:

18 JAN 91 4 RT 246 taken out by Staff Sergeant under order from CEO, comm., officer of 8th Tanks, have no AN-VVS2 night vision OPER.

The AAVC7A1 has as one can imagine many radios used for communication. One of the radios is designated as RT (Receiver-Transmitter) 246. The communications Staff Sergeant came and told me that he had to take 4 of our RT 246's with him. I asked who gave him that order and he told me that his communications officer did, as they needed to prepare them for future operations.

As I continued to take inventory of our track, I came across the fact that our track did not have an AN-VVS2 night vision device, which mounts in the driver's hatch to assist the driver

when driving in the night. This could be a problem as we were sure to take advantage of night operations capability. I let my superior know and was told that they would see to it that if night vision was needed that they would get it for my driver and I.

The Bradenton Herald Tribune on January 17, 1991 had on the front page of their paper a picture of President Bush with a quotation saying, "Five months ago, Saddam Hussein started this cruel war against Kuwait; tonight the battle has been joined. This military action taken in accord with United Nations resolutions and with the consent of the United States Congress follows months of constant and virtually endless diplomatic activity on the part of the United Nations, the United States and many, many other countries." The President of the United States was telling America on live television that diplomacy had failed and that we were now at war.

Journal entry:

19 JAN 91 Lockout adjusted, got painted sand color, found 2 oil leaks, one by engine oil dipstick on manifold, other back near starter OPER.

Talk had been going around about the possibility of getting reactive armor welded to our vehicles to protect us from possible Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) attacks. The protective armor never came. At least today we were getting our track painted a sand color. We would no longer appear to be a rolling oasis in the middle of the desert since the profile of the amtrack is quite high and we indeed were currently a woodland camouflage color.

Ever since we were attached to 8th Tank Battalion we lived on

our hog. It became our home. Sleeping quarters where ample. I slept well on the cold hard deck (floor) of the amtrack, which had non-slip pebbled ridges to help keep troops, who would be in the back of the amtrack, from slipping and falling on wet floors when they came aboard especially during water bourn operations. Typically, I slept in my sleeping bag with the zipper zipped all the way up over my head. I did this due to how unbelievably cold it would get inside our track at night in the middle of the Arabian Desert. I chose to leave my NOMEX suit and even my boots on when I slept just in case I had to get up fast due to an enemy attack. I guess I was trying to be prepared for the worst-case scenario. By God's grace I slept very well and would awaken refreshed.

Journal entry:

20 JAN 91 Vehicle starter connection bad, fuel pump connections going bad, needto change 10 roadwheels OPER.

Every morning it is very difficult getting out of my sleeping bag due to the cold. As long as I am inside of my government issued sleeping bag I am nice and toasty. Even unzipping the sleeping bag to let my face out is uncomfortably cold. I found it easiest to quickly unzip the bag and get out of it as fast as I possible.

Yesterday we found oil leaks and today our starter connection has gone bad. Our maintenance man was able to determine that it was just the connection and was able to repair it quickly. Further inspection of the outside of the vehicle made us aware of roadwheels, which were in poor shape. I noted that we would need to change 10 of the roadwheels and let maintenance know. I was told that no roadwheels were available to replace the bad ones at this time.

Journal entry:

21 JAN 91 Starter inop. Rear fuel pump inop., vehicle down, P.T.O. will not engage, left waiting for parts INOP.

Now our starter was not operational again and we learned that our fuel pump was not working. Making matters worse, our Power Take Off (P.T.O.) would not engage. Our track was inoperable or as we dubbed it, inop. We would have to wait for parts to be brought to us in order to have our track running again.

Thanks to our track being down, we found ourselves with extra time on our hands. It was just Lance Corporal and myself as everyone else had left us. I took a large permanent marker and drew a wild boar hog with cutters and smoke coming out of its snout on the outside of the track below the troop commander's hatch and on the port side (naval terminology for left) outside of our amtrack. I chose this symbol for a couple of reasons. One reason was that amtracks are nicknamed "hogs." I chose the wild boar because of my childhood as we used to hunt and raise them for pork.

Journal entry:

22 JAN 91 Still waiting for CSSD (Combat Service Support Detachment) to bring parts or trailer to pick us up, Captain came (with) security team and food/water INOP.

That evening Captain from 8th Tanks arrived with a team in a HMMWV (Humvee). He told us that he would stay outside of the vehicle with his team to provide security for our vehicle. Lance Corporal and I felt relieved that we had the added security.

I took turns with Lance Corporal staying awake that night for radio watch. We took 2-hour shifts. This was necessary to keep abreast of possible attacks from the enemy.

“Gas! Gas! Gas!” yelled the voice over the radio. I jumped up from my seat and donned my gas mask and then awakened Lance Corporal. Once he saw me giving the signal for gas (fast elbow pumps) and that I had my gas mask on, he too put on his gas mask. As he did so, I opened the rear hatch to our track and gave the signal to Captain. He chose to ignore my warning. Fortunately for him the “all clear” was given over the radio soon afterwards and we removed our gas masks. It turned out to be a false alarm. If it had been the real thing, Captain and his men may have died, I thought to myself. This was the second day of our vehicle being inop.

Journal entry:

23 JAN 91 Captain. left us and took mapboard, P.T.O. inop., lowboyed toCSSD (Combat Service Support Detachment), awaiting for starter, before being picked up 3 Army guys brought Pepsi INOP.

It was now day three of being inoperable. Our vehicle would need to be towed back to the rear to be fixed. We were told that the decision had been made that we were to wait for a tractor that would come pick us up. Captain told us that he had been ordered to take our map board, which the battalion commander used to keep track of where all his tanks were in the theatre of operations. We said goodbye to our security team. We were now left alone in the middle of nowhere.

I saw a HMMWV (Humvee) approaching us. As the vehicle pulled up next to us, we noticed that the men inside the Humvee were soldiers.

“Is there anything we can do?” asked one of the soldiers.

“No. We are waiting to be towed back to our rear for maintenance. I appreciate the offer though,” I replied.

“Well do you have enough water and food?” he asked concerned.

“I believe so. We have a case of MRE’s (Meals-Ready-to-Eat, which is food that replaced the old field rations for our military) and seven 25-gallon cans of water.”

“Well, do you have any Pepsi?” inquired the Army man.

“No.”

“Here. Have this case of Pepsi. We have plenty,” offered the soldier.

“Thanks,” I replied as I accepted the gift.

I watched as they drove off. It was as if they were angels sent by God just to encourage us.

Journal entry:

24 JAN 91 Top from 8th Tanks picked up all (Cryptographic equipment) and PLRS (Position, Locations And Reporting System) unit and antennae INOP.

It was now the fourth day of our vehicle being inop. Master Sergeant or Top (Master Sergeants in the Corps are often referred to as Top) from 8th Tanks came out to where we were. He told me that he was taking our all or Cryptographic equipment and our PLRS (Position, Locations And Reporting System) unit with its antennae.

Journal entry:

25 JAN 91 Right (AAVR7A1) towed us up to DSG (Direct Support Group), CSSD (Combat Service Support Detachment) didn't have equipment to fix P.T.O., P.T.O. still inop., starter fixed, CBR unit fixed INOP.

We were finally towed by an AAVR7A1 back to the rear to have our track worked on. Even though they did not have the parts to fix our P.T.O., they did get the starter and the CBR unit fixed. It was reassuring to have our CBR unit in working order. If we were to be gassed by a chemical agent, our filters in our gas mask would only be good for a few hours, whereas the filter in the CBR unit, which we would hook up to, would last 8 hours. The fifth day of being inoperable was relatively quiet.

Journal entry:

26 JAN 91 Coolant tower pulled so the P.T.O. could be pulled, awaiting pick up of P.T.O. to be floated. INOP.

I had no idea how complicated it was to have our P.T.O. repaired. The maintenance crew had to pull out our coolant tower in order to remove the P.T.O.. We were told that our now removed P.T.O. would be taken elsewhere for the actual repair.

Journal entry:

27 JAN 91 Super Bowl Sunday, Giants beat the Bills 20-19, still waiting for DSG (Direct Support Group) to float our P.T.O. INOP.

“The Giants beat the Bills 20 to 19,” a Marine informed us. I did not even realize that it was Super Bowl Sunday. It was strange to hear news from back in the states. How could people be leading normal everyday lives while we were out here in the Arabian Desert in the middle of a war to liberate a country that had been brutally overtaken by a madman dictator?

Journal entry:

28 JAN 91 Waiting for new P.T.O., engine oil contaminated, need new short drive fan shaft INOP.

It was now the eighth day of our vehicle being down. One of the maintenance guys informed me that the engine oil was contaminated and that we needed a new short drive fan shaft. What else could go wrong with our hog?

Journal entry:

29 JAN 91 Drained engine oil, added new oil, put in new P.T.O., left to join 8th tank, transmission gasket blew INOP.

Things were looking up. We had replaced our engine oil. The maintenance crew put back our P.T.O. We were ready to crank the engine. That old diesel engine whined loudly. She was ready to roll. After eight days Lance Corporal and I were ready to get back to 8th Tanks. We began to follow our escort back to our unit when our transmission gasket blew. It now became day nine of being non-operation or inop.

Journal entry:

30 JAN 91 DSG (Direct Support Group) changed tranny gasket, vehicle constantly goes into hydrostatic lock, followed contact team back to 8th Tanks OPER.

The next morning maintenance got busy and changed our transmission gasket. Our track kept going into hydrostatic lock, which is caused by excessive fuel, water or oil in the cylinders of the engine. At least we ended the day with our track being operational. This was a relief after having been broken down for nine days.

Three separate Iraqi incursions reported last night into Saudi to probe our troop locations. Eleven U.S. Marines were reported killed in one of these incursions. We were angry and could have entered into Kuwait that very moment. We were placed on 100% alert. All personnel were to remain on watch until further notice. This was now personal. Our emotions were high. A combination of being scared and wanting to do something about what had occurred today had my adrenaline running high. The terror came by night and God is my refuge and my fortress!

Journal entry:

31 JAN 91 Vehicle won't start, starter suspected to be bad, R7 came to get us and it broke down too, got a box from parents INOP.

It appears that I spoke too soon. This morning, once again we found ourselves unable to start our hog. We were told not to worry that we had an AAVR7A1 coming to our rescue. They

were to tow us back for further maintenance. The recovery vehicle pulled up next to us. I couldn't believe it but they were now unable to get their vehicle running. There we sat, two amtracks broken down.

I got a care-package from my parents today. They sent me instant oatmeal. It was a welcomed addition to my MRE diet. An earlier care package had come with a case of Soap-On-A-Rope in it, which we used to hang around the inside of our amtrack to use as air fresheners. We shared some with other amtracks.

Journal entry:

1 FEB 91 2nd R7 came started us, we towed 1st R7 back to DSG (Direct Support Group), changed starter, changed PTG (Pressure-Time Gear) fuel pump, took showers OPER.

The only time I ever saw more than one recovery amtrack was today. When the second AAVR7A1 arrived, they used slave cables to jump-start us. Once we were running, we attached our track to the broken down recovery track and towed them to the rear.

The mechanics changed our bad starter and PTG (Pressure-Time Gear) fuel pump. We were once again operational. A cold shower was available so we took advantage of it since they were very few and far between.

Journal entry:

2 FEB 91 Leak found in PTG (Pressure-Time Gear) fuel pump, another PTG pump put on, speedometer cable bad need new one OPER.

Today's paper called Arab News: Saudi Arabia's First English Language Daily Volume XVI Number 67, dated Saturday, February 2, 1991, had an article written from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia by "Agencies" which described yesterday's battle in Khafji. The article was entitled "Saudi, coalition forces beat back tanks incursions." In the article it stated, "...Iraqi tanks broke into Saudi territory last night and at least three were destroyed in a battle with U.S. Marines." The article continued, "The attack on Khafji, was part of a five-pronged incursion across the Saudi-Kuwait border...it was fought house-to-house, tank to tank...30 Iraqis were killed, about 400 taken prisoner... Khafji streets were littered with the debris of war — corpses, dead camels, twisted lamp posts, chunks of concrete from damaged buildings and the burned-out carcasses of Iraqi, Saudi and Qatari armored personnel carriers . . ."

Another article in that paper, called "Accept Big-2 offer, Syria urges Iraq," stated that the "United States and the Soviet Union issued a joint statement Tuesday offering a cease-fire if Iraq made 'an unequivocal commitment' to withdraw from Kuwait and took 'immediate, concrete steps' toward pullout." President Mikhail Gorbachev was the President of the U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) seeking to help broker the cease-fire.

Also, today we found that our PTG (Pressure-Time Gear) fuel pump is leaking. Maintenance changed it out. We now have a new PTG pump. Lance Corporal let me know that the speedometer cable is bad. We are unable to tell our speed. We are now two days in a row of being operational.

Journal entry:

3 FEB 91 Need to change all filters, tachometer is now inop., told need new one tachometer cable, going by watch to get hours, picked up by CSSD (Combat Service Support Detachment) OPER.

Our maintenance crew is truly doing a great job. They are doing all that they can do to keep our vehicle running. They let me know that all of the filters now need to be changed. The desert sand is wreaking havoc on our hog. They also informed me that our tachometer cable was going to need to be replaced and that we would need to keep track of hours utilizing a wrist-watch. Day three of being operational went well.

Today I met a Kuwaiti interpreter. I asked him about how he ended up with 8th Tank Battalion. He replied, "I was studying in England at Oxford University when my country was invaded. Naturally I came back as soon as I could to do what I could and now I am here serving as an interpreter." He seemed grateful for what the United States was doing in leading the charge to liberate his homeland. Later in our conversation, as he was slicing a piece of a red apple off to eat, he stated, "You know, most people peel an apple and throw away the peel. That is unwise as most of the nutrients of an apple are obtained from its skin."

Journal entry:

4 FEB 91 Now back with 8th Tanks, Staff Sergeant and Sergeant put our communication up 100%, rumor: on way home by March 5 OPER.

We made it back to 8th Tank Battalion. It was good to be back with our unit. The maintenance scene was getting to be a

little frustrating. Staff Sergeant came to our track with Sergeant from the communication section. I told them it was great to be back. Staff Sergeant said that they were going to replace our radios and get our communication system back up and fully operational. Some of the Marines were saying that we should be home by March 5th. It would be nice if that were to happen. It did not seem possible that we would be able to eject Saddam from Kuwait that quickly.

Journal entry:

5 FEB 91 Now back with Bravo Command, Still no 60 rounds OPER.

“You are now Bravo Command,” I was told. That made sense since we had been away for so long with maintenance problems. Now I had the Battalion Executive Officer on my track. I took note of the professionalism I had seen with all the supporting elements as well as the battalion leadership. I had made my concerns earlier to Staff Sergeant that we had an M-60 machine gun but had no rounds for it. He let me know that he was working on it.

Journal entry:

6 FEB 91 Changed tranny filter and HSU (Hydrostatic Steering Unit) filter, AAV Bravo 2nd Staff Sergeant and his maintenance helped us out OPER.

During down time we had our tranny and HSU (Hydrostatic Steering Unit) filters changed with the assistance of 2nd AAV's Bravo Company. Their Staff Sergeant was very happy to assist us with changing the filters. This was now the sixth day of being operational.

Journal entry:

7 FEB 91 Hydraulic line from reservoir blew, waiting for new hose, did about a 30-mile march with tanks INOP.

Today we went on a thirty-mile march with the tanks. Every time we stopped we had to quickly check fluid levels. Lance Corporal and I knew that we had a very limited time and that we had to check and top off fluids if necessary as fast as possible. Removing the engine panel to check the fluids exposes the hot engine and heat from the engine envelops the person who does so. To be quick, I use my sleeve on my NOMEX suit (a tracker's or tanker's fire retardant one piece olive drab colored work suit) to wipe away the hot oils from the dipstick. At the end of the march we found that our hydraulic line from the hydraulic fluid reservoir had blown. We leaked hydraulic fluid everywhere. Because of this our vehicle was now inop.

Journal entry:

8 FEB 91 2nd hydraulic line found bad, waiting for morning so Tank Retriever 88 can pull coolant tower to get to 2nd hose INOP.

Maintenance let me know that a second hydraulic line was found to be bad. I was told that a M-88 Tank Retriever would come tomorrow to pull our coolant tower since maintenance could not get to the leaking second hydraulic line. We would have to be inop for a second day.

Journal entry:

9 FEB 91 Coolant tower pulled, 2nd hose took off Lance Corporal went to BAS (Battalion Aid Station) to have tooth looked at and took a shower, he also took our laundry INOP.

It was now day three of being inoperable. The M-88 Tank Retriever arrived and our vehicle's coolant tower was pulled and maintenance went ahead and removed the second leaking hydraulic hose took. Lance Corporal's tooth had been hurting and he went to the Battalion Aid Station (BAS) to have it looked at. He told me that he would be happy take our laundry to have it washed. Of course I took advantage of that opportunity since having our clothes washed was a rarity. At least he would also get a chance to shower.

"Do you know where we could get extra MREs?" I asked our maintenance friends who were working on changing our filters. I felt it was important to stock up on some extra food for Lance Corporal and myself since we never knew when we might find our vehicle broke down.

"I happen to have an extra case of MREs. What have you got to trade for it?" asked Sergeant from maintenance.

"Don't know," I replied. "What do you want?"

"How about you bulkhead (Naval terminology for wall) clock over the aft (Naval terminology for rear) engine panel? I have always wanted one of those." The bulkhead clock was inside the amtrack and only found in the AAVC7A1 or command version of the AAV series. It was used to help the personnel inside the command track to synchronize time.

"Sure. I don't have much use for it anyhow," was my reply. I took it down and handed it to him. I now had 24 extra MREs.

Journal entry:

10 FEB 91 Lance Corporal wisdom tooth pulled, replaced two (hydraulic) hoses, added coolant 2 (gallons), took shower OPER.

Maintenance was able to replace our two hydraulic hoses today. They also added 2 gallons of coolant to our radiator. We are now operational again. Oorah!

Today Lance Corporal returned from the Battalion Aid Station. He had a wisdom tooth pulled and had a chit (naval terminology for paper authorization or receipt) placing him on light duty while he healed from the wisdom tooth extraction.

Journal entry:

11 FEB 91 Changed generator belt, flip flopped roadwheels OPER.

Today we had our generator belt changed as our old one was getting frayed and could break at any time. I asked maintenance about our bad roadwheels and he told me that they still did not have any roadwheels that we could replace them with. He suggested that we flip the roadwheels, which would at least bring out the better side of the roadwheels. I got busy helping maintenance with flipping the roadwheels.

Journal entry:

12 FEB 91 Went through training mine/breach field, 0700 Lance Corporal was off light duty from dentist (*this entry by Lance Corporal) OPER.

I asked Lance Corporal to enter an entry today for me. He was off light duty today. We went through a practice run of driving through a simulated breached minefield. It was exciting to be preparing for the upcoming ground campaign.

Journal entry:

13 FEB 91 Might have small tranny leak, Can't find it OPER.

Lance Corporal and I noticed a small puddle of red fluid. We may have a small transmission fluid leak. We will keep an eye on it. I wiped up the small amount of fluid to see if it would return.

Journal entry:

14 FEB 91 Still leaking tranny fluid, 60 miles road march north, Happy Valentine's Day, added more oil to tranny, got 2 boxes OPER.

It's Valentine's Day. The small puddle was back. We added more tranny fluid topping it off. We were told to prepare for a 60-mile road march north toward the Saudi/Kuwaiti border toward our final assembly area in preparation for entering into Kuwait to liberate her.

At night we peered into the dark starry skies as a steady stream of green and red lights flew overhead only to disappear as they crossed the Kuwaiti border continuing their flight in blackout mode. The ground shook and rolled with the constant bombing of enemy targets within Kuwait. I could only imagine what Marines of past battles felt like when the enemy which lay ahead was targeted by Naval and Air Force bombardments

in attempts to destroy the resistance physically and psychologically before a ground offensive.

Lance Corporal and I continue to take turns with radio watch at 2-hour intervals. He asked me how I could sleep with the continuous bombing occurring just over the border. "I guess that I am blessed to be able to sleep through anything. It feels like our amtrack rocks with the rhythm of the bombing and it puts me to sleep," I explained to Lance Corporal.

Journal entry:

15 FEB 91 Lance Corporal finished digging hole, Iraq announced will withdrawal but(with) conditions OPER.

Lance Corporal must be bored. He asked me if I minded if he dug a foxhole. We have never dug a foxhole before, but I told him if he wanted to he could. I didn't keep track of how long he dug for, but he dug a very large hole and laid down in it.

We were told today that Iraq had announced that it would be willing to withdrawal from Kuwait with certain conditions. President Bush had previously stated that we would only accept an unconditional surrender.

Journal entry:

16 FEB 91 Put plastic bag in seabag for saving stuff inside incase of NBC attackand wallet, etc. in bag OPER.

We haven't been told when we are going into Kuwait, but it must be soon. We were instructed to take all our belongings in our seabag, which we wanted to be protect from probable chemical gas attacks, and place them into plastic bags. We were then to place the plastic bags and put them back into our seabag.

Journal entry:

17 FEB 91 Rainy all day, PLRS (Position, Locations And Reporting System) unit taken out to be fixed, listened to David AllenCoe and Hank Jr., played Rummy 500 OPER.

Wow. It's raining. This is the first time I haven't seen rain in a long time. Communication Staff Sergeant informed me that he was removing our PLRS (Position, Locations And Reporting System) navigational unit to be fixed and would return it once he was complete.

Lance Corporal and I were playing cards to pass the time. He taught me how to play Rummy 500. We played and listened to country music while we played card.

Journal entry:

18 FEB 91 Got haircuts, got 190 M-16 rounds each, got 600 M-60 (rounds) finally thanks to Staff Sergeant OPER.

Everyone was lining up for haircuts. One of the Marine's had clippers and was giving us haircuts. I had let my mustache grow now since Desert Shield started and it was growing.

We were issued ammunition today. Staff Sergeant gave us each 190 rounds for our M-16 rifle and 600 rounds for my M-60 machine gun. I was grateful to receive the ammunition. It must be getting close to time to enter into Kuwait; otherwise we would not be issued our ammunition.

Journal entry:

19 FEB 91 Threw knives at tent pole (with) sand bag full of

bags, PLRS (Position, Locations And Reporting System) unit brought OPER.

“I have an idea. Let’s set up something we can throw knives at,” I suggested as a fun activity to Lance Corporal. He agreed and we took one of the desert camouflage netting poles placing sand bags on it. Aiming my K-Bar Marine Fighting Knife, of which I had two—one my cousin from Miami gave to me as a gift before being deployed and the other which was issued to me, I threw it and it spun one full rotation sticking hard into the pole. “I used to throw two or three knives at a time when I was a teenager and was able to get at least two to stick,” I told Lance Corporal.

Later that day our PLRS (Position, Locations And Reporting System) navigational system and antennae were brought back and the communication Staff Sergeant set them back up and had it working.

Journal entry:

20 FEB 91 Dozer came and made hills all around us OPER.

Combat engineers came and made hills all around us. It was a quiet day otherwise. A special issue, January 28, 1991 Newsweek magazine has an interesting article entitled, “The Killing Ground.” It speculates on the upcoming ground war. There is a graphic depicting a map of the theatre of operation with a caption that reads: “The Ground War Still to Come: A Likely Scenario.” It states, “It almost seemed that the war might be won with air power alone. But eventually soldiers and Marines must finish the job on the ground...It will mark the

first test of the U.S. Army's post-Vietnam doctrine of 'AirLand Battle':—a modern blitzkrieg characterized by rapid, violent armored thrusts — against Saddam Hussein's 545,00 troops in Kuwait and southern Iraq.”

We all wonder what the correct scenario will be. The unknown is where one's inner thoughts make a person contemplate his beliefs and faith in something. For me Scripture is my guide for the unknown. If we rely on God then surely he shall comfort us no matter the outcome. In Second Chronicles we see that it is good to rely on God—“...Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims (Libyans) a huge host (army), with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect (blameless) toward him . . .” On the flip-side, it is not good to place one's reliance on anything other than God.

Journal entry:

22 FEB 91 Friday Got BZO on M-16s and fires the M-60took showers at what will be a decontamination shower unit, 2nd LAI went into Kuwait OPER.

It felt good to fire our weapons. One of the regular active duty Marines was kind enough to teach us how to disassemble and assemble the M-60 machine gun. My experience with the amtrack's weapons had been more with the .50 caliber machine gun since I mostly trained with the AAVP7A1 and not the AAVC7A1, which did not have the .50 caliber machine gun.

To prepare for combat makes one see the reality of one's mortality. I wrote a final letter in case I was to be killed in action today. The 23rd Psalm came to mind:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [art] with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

We took showers today in a place that will become a decontamination (decon) unit to help clean any chemical agent(s) that our skin, clothes or equipment may come in contact with. A real concern was evident in military planners and their assessment of our troops being attacked by chemical or biological weapons. Not only had we received anthrax vaccinations and taken Nerve Agent Pyridostigmine Pretreatment (NAPP) tablet as preventative measures, (more information at the declassified documents at www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/marines/19970107/970107_oct96_decls2_0001.html) but now reports were out that there were 50,000 body bags in the theatre of operations and we were told that we would enter into Kuwait at MOPP level 2; MOPP (Mission Oriented Protective Posture) suits are the charcoal-lined suits that are used for protection when anticipation of chemical or biological attack is high. Level 2 meant that the only thing left to do if the gas alarm was given, was to don our gas masks and rubber gloves.

Charles H. Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers, was a great orator of the 19th century whose church in London, England was

always packed. One of his written works is a daily devotional in which I have often gleaned to further challenge my growing faith. On December 10th, Spurgeon writes, "If to die is but to enter into uninterrupted communion with Jesus, then death is indeed gain, and the black drop is swallowed up in a sea of victory." The apostle Paul similarly writes in his letter to the Philippians, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

Tonight reconnaissance teams crossed the border into Kuwait. We will be following shortly.

Journal entry:

23 FEB 91 Added more tranny oil, went to final assembly area OPER.

It was necessary to add more transmission fluid today. We are moving again, this time to our final assembly area we have been told. Everyone is preparing himself for the coming storm. The unknown and unseen instills mixed emotions of fear and excitement. I think of the book of Job were the old patriarch states emphatically of his God and mine, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation...For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

I knew it was time to not only prepare myself for physical battle, but for spiritual warfare as well. The apostle Paul

writes in Ephesians: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

We had been issued our Kevlar vests as well as shorts. I set my Kevlar shorts on my gunner’s seat. It was too bulky to wear and I figured that it would at least provide protection to my lower body if we were to run over a mine.

“Everyone come and get a hot meal tonight,” we were told. Lance Corporal and I decided that we would follow that advice as hot meals were few and far between. We were being served a steak dinner, which we were told was following tradition prior to entering a battle.

The apostle Paul reminds us that nothing, not even the sword (war) can separate us from Christ’s love:

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for

us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Journal entry:

24 FEB 91 Crossed the breach into Kuwait, took prisoners, had incoming between mine field OPER.

I watched as red streaks of light ripped through the early morning sky. Multiple Rocket Launcher Systems (MLRS) were firing into Kuwait just prior to our entrance into the breached minefields on the border of Kuwait. As part of 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, our unit, the 8th Tank Battalion, was assigned to follow in trace of 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment (1/6) when we entered into Kuwait. The U.S. Army's Tiger Brigade (1st Brigade, 2nd Armored Division) was on our left flank. To our right was the 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. The 1st Marine Division was to the east of us (the 2nd Marine Division). Also, Arab Forces, which included Egyptian and Saudi Arabian troops, were to the east of 1st Marine Division.

The order was given to saddle up and start our engines. Lance Corporal and I had completed our pre-operation checks and found our hog ready to roll. Lance Corporal started the 400 cubic inch diesel engine. It whined sounding like a beast with no concern for who might hear her. We were given the order to go. Our AAVC7A1, Bravo Command moved forward tracks churning through the desert sand. We entered into Kuwait through Breach Lane Red 1 along with the AT (Anti-Tank) TOW company. Alpha Command with 8th Tanks battalion commander was going through Breach Lane Red 2.

While driving through Breach Lane Red 1, we suddenly came to a complete halt. I did not know why we had stopped. The battalion executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel was on our vehicle. Things seemed quiet. I heard a screeching sound then saw explosions showering sand and shrapnel as several enemy 122 mm artillery rounds impacted a few hundred feet to our front and right side. I quickly lowered my seat and closed my hatch as shrapnel flew in every direction. As soon as I could, I opened my hatch and manned my M-60 machine gun. Lieutenant Colonel excitedly exclaimed, "Snow storm! Snow storm!" into his microphone of his CVC (Combat Vehicle Crewman's helmet). More round impacted to our port side. We were being bracketed in. The Lieutenant Colonel's radio transmission was answered with our own forces firing on the Iraqi artillery positions, which silenced the incoming barrage.

The Christian hymn "I Will Follow" written by Mac Lynch, © 1984 *The Wilds* (copied by permission of the WILDS, all rights reserved) reminds me to follow, live for, surrender all, rest and trust in Jesus Christ:

I will follow Thee, my Savior, Where'er the pathway
may go:

Thru' the storm or thru' the valley Or thru' the great
trials so low.

I rest in Thee, trust in Thee, I place my life in Thy hands.

I will follow Thee, my Savior; Lead on my Shepherd,
Lead on.

I will live for Thee, my Savior, Tho' war and strife mark
the way.

I'm so weak, but Thou art mighty, So live thru' me day

by day

I rest in Thee, trust in Thee, I place my life in Thy hands.
I will follow Thee, my Savior; Lead on my Shepherd,
Lead on.

I surrender all, my Savior, I hold no thing back from
Thee;
Every part is Thine to use, Lord, Thy living sacrifice be.
I rest in Thee, trust in Thee, I place my life in Thy hands.
I will follow Thee, my Savior; Lead on my Shepherd,
Lead on.

At one point we were asked to cross over to Breach Lane Red 2 when a suspected chemical mine was found, which would require us to drive over unexploded or breached minefield territory. We were ordered to go to MOPP Level 4, which now included all the suit's pieces even the rubber gloves and gas mask. Lieutenant Colonel declined to follow that advice deciding instead to take our chances in our stalled lane. I heard someone state that our detector indicate that the chemical mine was a mustard gas mine.

After successfully crossing the minefield belts, Sergeant Major boarded our track and informed us that we had just earned the Combat Action Ribbon (CAR). He snickered saying that in the Vietnam War he earned it after hand-to-hand combat. He asked for our full names and social security numbers, which had replaced military service numbers.

At one point in our advance there was a M109 Howitzers, which is a tracked self-propelled howitzer mobilized artillery with a 155mm cannon, rolling up next to us pausing briefly

to fire their main gun. This one particular howitzer must have been no more than 50 feet to my right or starboard side. A thundering and deafening boom sounded that rocked my head even though I was wearing my CVC helmet, which had a padded inner liner and receiver element that covers both ears and effectively silences most sounds to enable close monitoring of radio transmissions. Thoughts of losing some of my hearing crossed my mind.

We continued to drive this time without resistance. Our momentum was stopped when we came across Iraqis who were surrendering. At first we would notice 1 or 2 Iraqis coming toward us and then 20 or 50. We came to a complete halt again. This time due to the overwhelming number of EPW's (Enemy Prisoners of War) being taken. Extra help was needed to process the prisoners and Lance Corporal dismounted our hog to go and assist with the taking of prisoners. I remained on the track manning the M-60 machine gun in case of a prisoner revolt.

The following account of what took place on February 24, 1991 is an excerpt from (declassified) unclassified 8th Tank Battalion History documents, which can be found at www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassimages/marines/19970107/970107_aug96_decls1_0001.html. These papers were declassified as part of releasing any Persian Gulf War documents that included anything about possible chemical attacks. This was an attempt by the U.S. government and military to investigate and publicly disclose any possible link to these occurrences as a cause of the Persian Gulf War Syndrome. A large number of Persian Gulf War veterans have been diagnosed as having this syndrome, which often debilitates or kills the person.

8th Tank Battalion advanced across the Saudi-Kuwait

border in trace of 1/6 (against minimal resistance. Tiger Brigade advanced on the battalion's left flank and 8th Marines advanced on the right flank. The battalion was to enter Breach Lane Red 2 (vic QS 68978) with Company B, Bravo Command and half of H&S Company going through Red 1 and AT (TOW) Company, Alpha Command and half of H&S Company going through Red 2.

The battalion followed in trace of 1/6 with 2nd LAI Battalion pulling in behind 1/6 and ahead of 8th Tank Battalion just in advance of the column's entry into lanes Red 1 and 2 through the first minefield belt. This movement into the column by 2nd LAI Battalion's screening force was considered tactically necessary but created some coordination difficulties both at the time they merged into the column and during the transit of the lanes. The presence of 2nd LAI Battalion with its extensive logistical train slowed 8th Tank Battalion's movement through the Red 1 breach lane and in fact brought it to a complete halt for an extended period while battalion elements were in the lane, while the battalion endured sporadic enemy incoming artillery and mortar fire. 8th Tank Battalion (-) encountered some light resistance as it advanced the two Iraqi minefield belts. This consisted primarily of sporadic artillery and mortar incoming, particularly in the vicinity of Red Lane 1. At about the same time, the Bravo Command Group found itself bracketed by 122mm artillery while stalled in the lane awaiting 2nd LAI Battalion to move on. At one point, a suspected chemical mine was found in Red Lane I which caused the lane to be designated a MOPP 4 lane. By approximately 1200 on 24 February 1991,

8th Tank Battalion (-) had passed through both minefield belts and established itself in its assigned blocking position on the left flank of Regimental Objective A.

The remainder of the day was spent consolidating the battalion position and processing Iraqi prisoners of war. Suspected tank positions were engaged by the battalion. Over 500 EPW's were processed by the battalion before nightfall. Resistance in the battalion's zone was light, and often enemy positions put up only token resistance before surrender.

Shortly after nightfall, a U.S. Army HMMWV (Humvee) with three soldiers in it wandered into a nearby minefield and ran into an anti-personnel mine. Members of Bravo Company, Alpha Command and the Battalion Aid Station responded to the scene immediately. One soldier, the driver, was fatally injured and died shortly after the mine detonation. The gunner was injured and was medevaced from the battalion's Alpha Command area. The Lieutenant, riding in the front passenger seat, had minor injuries and spent the night with the Alpha Command Group before being picked up by his command the following morning. 8th Tank Battalion personnel extracted the damaged vehicle from the minefield and secured it until the Army could take charge of it. The death of the soldier weighed heavily on the battalion personnel involved in the rescue.

By 2300 on 24 February, Regimental Objective C was secured. 8th Tank Battalion remained in its blocking position all night without further incident. During the action on the 24th, the battalion (-) and its detached elements were responsible for the destruction of numerous enemy tanks, bunkers, armored vehicles, and through

its firepower, was the proximate cause for the surrender of numerous Iraqi troops.

Journal entry:

25 FEB 91 Added 2 quarts oil to tranny, Lance Corporal driving excellent haven't hit a mine yet, poor visibility from smoke, etc. OPER.

Iraqi troops, under order from Saddam, had set many oil wells on fire in an attempt to destroy as much as possible as they began to retreat out of Kuwait. The oil well fires were tremendous and made it difficult to see more than a few hundred feet at times. It was midday and it appeared to be nighttime. The sun could not peek through the thick clouds of oil and smoke. I laughed at Lance Corporal and asked him what were all the black smudges on his face. He informed me that I too had black soot all over my face. The oil was very thick in the air.

As we drove, we had to be careful not to get too close not only to the raging oil well fires, but also to the burned out hulls of tanks and personnel carriers that were still burying and continued to have secondary explosions send off shrapnel in different direction. At one point I thought I saw two individual off to my right and I asked the Lieutenant Colonel if we had any of our men on the ground in the area. He told me no that we did not. I asked permission to fire, which he did give. At that point the two figures seem to drop and I fired a burst from my M-60 machine gun in their direction. Lieutenant Colonel told me not to worry about it and that there were plenty of other of our troops coming in behind us who would mop up.

An article entitled "At War: Iraq Attack Gets Going" was

in the newspaper Sarasota Herald Tribune, which was dated February 24, 1991, and gave the following coalition forces strength statistics: "The U.S. Army has 295,000 troops in Saudi Arabia, while the Marines have 94,000 (Operation Desert Storm became the largest single Marine operation in U.S. history), including an amphibious force of 18,000 men on ships in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. force includes 10 divisions: two airborne divisions, three armored divisions, three mechanized infantry divisions, and two Marine divisions...The U.S. has 2000 tanks, more than 2,000 artillery pieces, and 2,200 armored personnel carriers. Other allied nations sent 205,000 troops to the Persian Gulf."

Journal entry:

26 FEB 91 Tour guide going great, I ground guided Lance Corporal down a steep hill, everyone inside was tossed TOW took out bunker 7 KIA OPER.

Things are going smoothly. We are only being slowed by the taking of EPW's. I heard a radio transmission asking for permission to fire at an Iraqi concrete bunker.

"Did you try and request that they surrender?" asked Lieutenant Colonel.

"Yes," was the reply from the AT (TOW) crew.

"Did you try and ask in Arabic."

"Yes. But still no reply."

"Then fire."

“Aye. Aye, sir.”

Silence fell over the radio frequency. A few minutes passed and then a voice came back on the airwaves, “Seven confirmed Iraqi KIA’s (killed in action).”

The following account of what took place on February 24-28, 1991 is an excerpt from (declassified) unclassified 8th Tank Battalion History documents, found at www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassimages/marines/19970107/970107_aug96_decls1_0001.html:

(AT (Tow) Company, 8th Tank Battalion)...

In three days of combat, TOW Company was responsible for 37 Iraqi Army KIAs and the capture of one thousand, five hundred and seventy three enemy prisoners of war (EPWs).

Seventy of the captured EPWs were officers. Seven T-55s, one T-62, two MTLBS, 1 BRDM and six armed bunkers were destroyed by AT (TOW) Company. Five trucks and a supply trailer were also destroyed. Three T-62 tanks, one BMP, two APCs, and two MTCBs were captured. One hundred and sixty enemy bunkers were cleared. Forty-four TOW missiles were fired, twenty-two hit their targets, thirteen were launch excursions (bad missiles), and nine were misses. Four hundred sixty two Iraqi automatic weapons and RPGs were seized and destroyed.

(A Company, 8th Tank Battalion) . . .

Commence attack on Kuwait. Breached two mine-

fields. Two engineer tanks lost to mine hits in left lane. 1st platoon completes breach. Company engaged by enemy direct and indirect fire starting at first mine-field. Company takes numerous prisoners (CQT 6410). Company engaged in long firefight with tanks/infantry at large defensive position. Numerous enemy vehicles were destroyed (QT 6415). Assume AA as Battalion reserve. G Company assists in trench clearing. Lost 1st platoon mine roller. Company resupplied.

Company engages and destroys several T-72's, T-62's and SP artillery, and captures prisoners (QT 6320). Company captures chemical platoon. Company negotiates inhabited area, takes and returns fire. Company halts at Battalion's defensive position (QT 6427), and engages enemy troops and vehicles. Took friendly fire from right flank. LCpl (3rd platoon) injured. Received FROG fire...

26 Feb 1991: Company resupplied, resumes attack. Destroys save tanks and vehicles, heavy fire drives infantry to surrender. Key area bypassed for F Company. Move to PL Bear. Numerous enemy vehicles destroyed and troops engaged attempting to flee from city on PL (Phase Line) Bear. Night move with F Company to blocking position, Company engages and destroys several vehicles and takes prisoners. Company occupies blocking position w/ F Company and TOW's at QT 6844. TOW's I.D. surface laid minefield end mark for passage.

27 Feb 1991: Receive word on cease fire. Receive word to go to MOPP 0. Cease taking NAP and CIPRO pills.

28 Feb 1991: Coalition forces up PL Bear to Kuwait. Cease fire confirmed.

(B Company, 8th Tank Battalion)

On 21 February 1991, we began taking nerve agent pills and anthrax pills.

On 22 February 1991, we received our first actual combat operations order, witnessed by our Battalion XO, LtCol. All came away knowing their mission. A nervous excitement swept over the company. The bombings are now more severe to our northeast and north. B-52's, artillery, MRLS, fixed wing and battleships are all pounding their targets. A sound we have come to love. We will move through lame Red 1.

On 24 February 1991 at 0500, we left our assembly area. At 0523, our lead element entered Kuwait. It was a cool, windy day with light rain. We stayed in the breach longer than desired, and received incoming artillery. Upon moving through the breach, several EPW's were found. They seemed glad to see us. Two B Company Marines tossed hand grenades into a Chinese T-69II to neutralize it. Later, B Company suppressed a trench line resulting in the capture of 3 EPW'S. One a LtCol, an apparent Brigade Commander. The company occupied its assigned battle positions, which was surrounded by several bunkers, containing many weapons. Thousands of EPW's were encountered.

At 1915 hours, after setting up a defensive perimeter, we witnessed the explosion of a HUMMWV in the minefield. Our Corpsman, HM3 and Bridge Crew Sgt's, went into the minefield to render aid. The damaged vehicle contained 3 U.S. Army soldiers. One died and two survived. A sobering experience.

On 25 February 1991 (AA grid 565105), we moved northwest as Regimental Reserve, an armored counter punch to meet an expected armored force dug-in. Destroyed T-55's and T-62II's were encountered everywhere. More EPW'S, burning hulks and carnage. The day became very dark. At 1400, there was little sunlight. By 1800, one could literally not see a hand six inches from a face. Night vision goggles were ineffective due to the smoke. The night was spent in a Battalion coil, crewman in their seats.

On 26 February 1991, 0500 Reveille (Red Con 1). Extreme darkness caused by cloud cover, burning oil fields and several burning hulks. More EPW'S. Eventually, we moved to the outskirts of Al-Jahara. Our position skirted Kuwait City dump and contained several bunkers and hulks. There was much concern about the bunkers and tanks being booby trapped. We found what appeared to be an Iraqi torture chamber in the landfill site.

Driving virtually unopposed throughout the day, we arrived at a site, which the command was considering to use to bivouac for the upcoming night. It was deemed unsanitary, as the Iraqis, who had recently abandoned the site, did not maintain the same

hygienic practices as U.S. military units do when in the field. They have probably held this position for over 6 months and it showed. Thankfully our command opted to find a more suitable site to bivouac.

I noticed on a few occasions some of the Marines on our vehicle taking the opportunity during pauses in our driving to take pictures of burned out enemy vehicles and tanks, which often had grotesquely charred Iraqi bodies visible in their turrets. I asked one of the Marines what the need was to take these pictures, as we would likely never forget these scenes that were now etched in our brains.

Journal entry:

27 FEB 91 People getting in trouble for searching in bunkers for souvenirs OPER.

One of the Marines who had entered an abandoned Iraqi bunker asked me if I wanted an Iraqi uniform. "No thanks," I told him. Another Marine handed me a leaflet. Thousands of these leaflets had been dropped by our Air Force. Their intention was to let the Iraqi forces know that we were coming and that they should surrender or die. The leaflet has cartoon pictures on one side. The top of this side depicts an Iraqi soldier envisioning within a bubble caption two tanks and a helicopter actively firing their guns while an Iraqi soldier on foot stands by observing the destruction being brought on by these machines. On the bottom of that picture is that same Iraqi holding his arms up high surrendering to a friendly American soldier whose rifle is slung over his shoulder in a non-threatening way. Three flags representing the multi-national forces, which includes the US and Saudi Arabia, wave behind the American soldier. A bubble

caption coming from the surrendering Iraqi soldier depicts the Iraqi back home with his family. His wife, son and daughter stand with him in their home, which has an Iraqi flag hanging on the wall. The following is written in Arabic as well as in English on the opposite side of the leaflet:

CEASE RESISTANCE — BE SAFE

To seek refuge safely, the bearer (of this leaflet) must strictly adhere to the following procedures:

1. Remove the magazine from your weapon.
2. Sling your weapon over your left shoulder, muzzle down.
3. Have both arms raised above your head.
4. Approach the Multi-National Forces' positions slowly, with the lead soldier holding this document above his head.
5. If you do this, you will not die.

Journal entry:

28 FEB 91 Ready to roll north, order came to cease hostilities, war is over OPER.

Early in the morning we were preparing to move and continue our attack. "Get ready to roll on a moment's notice," we were instructed. Moving quickly and having adrenaline running at high levels, I jumped off the top of the track rather than taking the hand rails down to save time during last minute vehicle checks. "I could have injured my back," I thought to myself. Orders were received to cease all hostilities. We were to await further orders, but in essence not to engage the enemy unless he fired upon us. It appears that the war is over.

"Listen up," instructed Staff Sergeant. "We have been informed that the local Kuwaiti population will more than likely

be celebrating tonight and when they do so they will be firing their weapons into the air. So don't get jumpy and return fire."

Journal Entry:

1 MAR 91 People finding souvenirs and Trading OPER.

Marines continue to seek souvenirs. We were ordered not to even think about keeping any Iraqi weapons. Some of the guys were upset with this order as they were hoping to take home an AK-47, the Soviet era infantryman rifle. Our personal gear and seabags would be checked before departing for the United States of America.

Journal entry:

2 MAR 91 Went north to Al-Jahra, people from city lined up down road waving, Lance Corporal threw an MRE to kids over a fence, Road wheel snapped off. OPER.

Today we drove into the city of Al-Jahra. Kuwaitis lined up the streets as we drove in a column. It felt like we were in a World War II movie. A grateful Kuwaiti people waved at us and children ran from a distance following our vehicles. Lance Corporal tossed an MRE to the running children, which the kids raced for as if it were candy. They were all ecstatic to have their country liberated after having been conquered and occupied by a brutal and ruthless dictator.

6

WOUNDED: ANGELS CHARGE

For he shall give his ANGELS CHARGE over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in [their] hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

“Angels Charge”

Time froze that moment when all went wrong,
Bleeding you grow faint and consciousness now harder to
chase
Doubts and fears rise for it seems that the enemy is strong;
But wait, greater is He that was wounded for Adam's race!

Corpsman, corpsman is the call,
Pain and tears begin to flow at large;
This is the road of many a Christian Marine who did fall,
Fear not for your safety is the Angel's charge!

With Paul we cry to live is Christ, to die is gain,
Hold on dear Christian for to lean on Him we must;
Worship Him even in the face of death we must not refrain;
With Job we cry out, though He slay me yet will I trust!

Kuwait/Saudi Arabia/Germany/USA
March, 1991

Journal entry:

3 MAR 91 Got shot in left leg by Lance Corporal on accident, helo to Al Jabal Saudi, had surgery OPER.

Captain came by our track and reminded us that we needed to take the downtime to clean our weapons. Lance Corporal and I acknowledged his directive. I cleaned my M-16 rifle quickly and got busy writing a letter to get Lance Corporal promoted. I wrote the following:

I write this letter of recommendation concerning the Lance Corporal. His action and knowledge of his job, enabled us to complete our mission with 8th Tank Battalion. This Marine's follow through ensured the safety of personnel and kept our AAVC7A1 operable and in good condition. He showed leadership qualities in a combat situation. He made sure all orders given to him were followed through. Myself being an NCO see that the Lance Corporal is most definitely ready to take on the responsibilities of a NCO.

Carlos A. Fonte, Cpl, USMC 3 MAR 91

When I finished writing the letter I stood up to place the letter in a cubby by the crew chief station in the back of the track when suddenly a deafening bang echoed in the back of our hog. I was knocked off of my feet by the impact from what I later learned was an accidental discharge from Lance Corporal's M-16 rifle. Intense pain sent my leg into convulsions. I was

yelling at the top of my lungs for help. I could not believe what had just happened. Lord, save me!

Psalms 25 reads how I felt at that time in my soul: "... Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee. . ."

Fear gripped Lance Corporal as he ran to me and began holding my head and trying to see what he could do repeating that he was sorry. He then quickly picked me up and carried me to the back of the track and out of the vehicle through the personnel hatch on the raised ramp of the Amphibian Assault Vehicle. The Battalion Surgeon, Commander, was nearby and arrived to assess and help me. Commander worked to stop the bleeding. He gave me intravenous fluids, morphine for pain and antibiotics to help prevent infection. Looking down at my leg, I could see a large hole in my outer upper left thigh. Skin was rolled back and blood coming out. Others were gathered around and watched, while Commander was working on my leg. I could hear the helicopter (I believe it was a CH-53 Marine helicopter) land nearby. As it landed, I felt the sting of the sand blasting me from the force of the twirling helicopter blades.

On July 16, 1997 I posted the following essay on the Gulf War Veteran Resource Pages: *Tracings in the Sand*. The essay can still be found at the following website: http://www.gulfweb.org/tracings/tos_show.cfm.

No Pain—On March 3rd, 1991, just a few days after the

temporary cease of hostilities between the coalition forces and Iraq, I was shot in the upper left thigh by an accidental discharge of an M-16 A2 rifle.

My driver had finished cleaning his weapon and, after placing it down, the rifle discharged. Screaming and dropping to the floor inside our command vehicle, I couldn't believe what had just happened to me.

Luckily the battalion surgeon was only a few vehicles away. He arrived on the scene as I was being pulled out of the 26-ton amphibious command vehicle. He immediately injected me with morphine, which decreased the pain to where it was at least bearable. Taking his scissors, he cut away my clothing. An I.V. had been started, but I did not know when or by whom. I was well into an alternate state of consciousness. Feeling overly happy and nearly pain free, I ridiculously asked the officer, while he was attempting to batter me with questions concerning feeling in my toes, if he could get me the bullet that had minutes earlier passed through my leg. I think I wanted it as a souvenir. A Staff Sergeant, who was standing over me, told me to shut up and not worry about the bullet and concentrate on the matter at hand, my wound and the questions being asked of me. Next the doctor asked me if I still felt pain and that if I did he could give me another shot of morphine. What an idiot! Of course I was going to say I was embracing pain beyond tolerance. Another shot later and, wow, I was really doing good.

So there I was, on a stretcher in the middle of Kuwait, feeling great. I began to wonder what would come next. I think I lost and regained consciousness several times. The helicopter landed and sand was being blown all over the place. They placed me

in the chopper, I don't remember it but they must have. Most of the ride in that helicopter was while I was unconscious to the world, I think. A few times I would look across from me and see this guy staring at me. He had a crew helmet on and dark goggles, so I could not make out his face. He just stared and I would try and wave to him. He must have been thinking I was crazy or something. The next thing I remember is being carried off the helicopter and noticing I still had a crew helmet on myself. As my friend in the helicopter started to go back into the "bird," I yelled to him over the deafening whirl of the blades. He looked at me and I handed him back his helmet. He thanked me and then disappeared into the chopper and it took off. Just before entering the tent hospital known as Navy Fleet Hospital 5, a person came up beside my stretcher and asked me to sign a document. Naturally I asked what it was for and was told that it was a release form so they could take pictures of my wound to use in training, showing the effect of a high velocity round from the distance of about nine feet. My fine motor skills, I learned, were not very fine. I signed my name in a way that I couldn't even read it. Pain was minimal. The morphine had created its' desired effect wonderfully on me. I was feeling fine. Then they stuck a catheter in me, which created a pain that dwarfed my traumatic gunshot. I think I passed out soon after. The next time I awoke I found myself strapped down in an operating room. The surgeon was exploring and cleaning out my exit wound. Panic overcame me, I hate being tied down. I told him he had better untie me because I was about to vomit. It wasn't a bluff. He had someone, I guess a nurse, untie one hand and give me a container. I held it with my free hand and filled that puppy up. Once again I fell from consciousness. Upon awakening, I found myself across from a nurses station with my leg bandaged up and an I.V. still attached to me. The drugs

they were giving me gave me a euphoric feeling. This continued for several days while the pain killers slowly weakened in strength. As I came back to earth the pain

became a reality again. Undoubtedly the altered state of consciousness created by the drugs kept me from going into shock and helped me get through a traumatic experience.

Journal entry:

4 MAR 91 Taken good care at FH5ICU 4 (*no entry)

Naval Fleet Hospital 5 was a large “air tent” hospital. I had been placed in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) 4. I remember seeing an Egyptian soldier come walking in to receive urgent care. I felt very weak and my leg was throbbing.

My first encounter with a physical therapist was today. She came up to my bed took hold of my leg and abruptly moved it while telling me, “You need to start moving it.” Ouch, did that ever hurt.

Today I was carried out of the hospital on a litter, which was on wheels. I was told that I was to make a call home as my family was worried about me. Apparently a casualty call was made in which a Marine Colonel and a Navy Chaplain had visited my family. Naturally they thought the worst when the casualty call team arrived and thought that I may have been killed. Unfortunately the team did not know my condition. They only knew that I had been shot by accident. The lack of details known by the team necessitated that I call home as soon as possible to ease their fears.

Journal entry:

5 MAR 91 Given blood (*no entry)

“I am going to give you 2 pints of blood. You could use more, but you are young and your body will quickly make up for it,” my nurse informed me as she hung the blood up on the IV pole. Feeling weak and rather sedated I smiled and thanked her. Could it be possible that I might lose my leg, I wondered. My left leg was throbbing and it did not feel like the pain medication was helping.

Journal entry:

6 MAR 91 Lt. Col. visited me, should go to Germany on Friday (*no entry)

My 4th Amphibian Assault Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel, came by to visit me in the Intensive Care Unit. I remember that he looked at me almost as if he wanted to say something but refrained himself from doing so. I smiled at him. It was good to see a familiar face. He asked how I was doing. He inquired if I wanted to press charges on Lance Corporal for what had happened. I told him that I knew that this had been an accident and that Lance Corporal felt terrible about what had happened. I remember the concern and sorrow he had when he came to my side after I had fallen in the back of our hog. Lieutenant Colonel informed me that the Marine Corps would nonetheless press charges against Lance Corporal.

7

POST-GULF WAR: HIS LOVE UPON ME

Because he hath set HIS LOVE UPON ME, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

“His Love Upon Me

Dear Christian it is you whom He did spare,
Look back and see that future fears he too will destroy;
Forever I will follow Him may you declare.
Praise Him continually with unspeakable joy!

Perfect love comes from Him,
For He keeps you as He is faithful;
Read His Word with eagerness and not on a whim,
Thereby His clear Voice you will not muffle.

His love is upon me, may you shout,
From your workplace and you house;
Fear not what man can do, In God have no doubt,
So remember it is you He did espouse.

Several patients and myself were being loaded onto a C-141B “STARLIFTER” a cargo and troop transport plane, which was being used as a litter and ambulatory transport to

Germany. We were at approximately 33,000 feet cruising at 489 mph when I told a flight nurse that I needed to use the bathroom. She asked if I thought I could walk to the bathroom. Of course I had to say yes. As soon as I stood up from the litter I collapsed falling like a meteor. The nurse was not pleased with me and got help to get me back onto my litter. She then handed me a urinal.

We landed at Ramstein Air Force Base in Landstuhl, Germany. I noticed a full-bird colonel assisting with the offloading of the patients. At one point, the hurried airmen removing litter patients like myself dropped a wounded soldier, who appeared to have a cast. I heard that poor soldier yell from pain. When the next pair of off loaders came to get me I said partially kidding, "Don't drop me." They laughed, picked up my litter and took me off the plane.

Next, I was loaded onto a TA-53 German helicopter. The German crew smiled at me. Germany had not sent troops to the theater of operations, but was helping out in different ways behind the scene. When we got into flight I asked the German who was watching me how to say trees in German. He yelled over the deafening whirling of the helicopter blade, "Bäume." The helicopter ride was very choppy with constant little drops and lifts. I was in awe of the beautiful trees and their deep greens, which I had not seen since before arriving in the desert on December 1990. God is awesome!

We landed at U.S. Army Hospital Nuernberg in Nuernberg, Germany. I was taken off of the German helicopter and brought into the main hospital. Two Marines who were working as liaison personnel for the Marine Corps welcomed me. I could not

believe it but one of the Marines was a WM from the Tampa Reserve Unit. She was part of our I&I staff working as an admin (administration) clerk. I asked her if she had heard how the others were doing and asked how she ended up in Germany. She told me that she had not heard from the others. She also said that she had been given orders to go to Germany. They asked me if there was anything that they could do for me. I told them that I would appreciate it if they could get me a uniform. Since I had been MedEvac'ed (medical evacuation by helicopter) and then AeroEvac'ed (aeromedical evacuation by plane and helicopters from field hospital to hospital for continued care) without any personal belongings including clothing I would need everything including socks and skivvies (Naval terminology for underwear). They were happy to oblige me. They quickly returned with the smallest sized woodland camouflage that they could find. I was thrilled to receive the clothing.

An officer, who was a surgeon, introduced himself to me and told me that he was going to do a debridement on my leg to excise necrotic tissue. I was placed under general anesthesia again for the surgery. The surgeon let me know that I had developed an infection and that he had placed me on antibiotics.

I feel God's presence and love upon me. My prayers were becoming more intimate and full of thanksgiving.

One day, I was taken to the basement for whirlpool treatments with Benodine lotion and I saw a soldier who was in great pain. He had been burned over most of his body. His vehicle had run over a mine. The physical therapy assistant was very kind. He played music in the background trying to motivate his patients.

On the floor I met a nurse who told me that she would get me a souvenir from Germany. I thanked her for her thoughtfulness. She bought me a U.S. Army Hospital Nuernberg drinking mug.

I met another soldier who was in an accident on the German Autobahn. His jaw was wired up and he was extremely uncomfortable. He told me that he was miserable, as he had to have pureed food and liquids. He could not chew.

Two men came into my room with my nurse. They went on to explain that they represented the CEO of Mercedes Benz of Germany and wanted to give me a \$200 dollar check. They let me know that it was a gift given by their boss for returning injured military personnel from South West Asia. It was meant as a token of appreciation and support for our mission as well as a way to get the wounded men funds to purchase needed items as most were coming with nothing in their possessions.

I began to propel myself around in a wheel chair. One of the first things I did was cash the check Mr. Benz gave to me then I went to the hospital barber and got a haircut. "Can you give me change in German money?" I asked. He was happy to accommodate me in the request.

"I need to get home," I told my doctor.

"You still have an infection and technically should stay until that clears," replied Colonel.

I spent nine days at U.S. Army Hospital Nuernberg. On the 10th day, I was once again boarded onto a C-141B for the long

flight over the Atlantic Ocean. Again I found myself lying on a litter. I slept the majority of the flight over the big pond.

We landed at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. I watched as wounded soldiers and Marines were approached by liaison personnel in order to pin Purple Heart Medals on their clothing. Many of these men had been wounded in combat and where being honored by fellow servicemen.

Several of the wounded, including myself, were then on a much smaller plane, a C-9A "NIGHTINGALE." Our first stop would be Scott Air Force Base in Illinois to drop off a patient. We next flew to Homestead Air Force Base dropping off more patients.

We arrived at my final destination, MacDill Air force Base in Tampa, Florida. It was nighttime. An ambulance took me from the runway to the base hospital. In the hospital I received a phone call. It was Lieutenant Colonel from 4th Amphibian Assault Battalion. He told me that Channel 8 News was going to call me to ask about my injury. He let me know that I did not have to talk to them if I did not want. He said that I could tell them anything I wanted. He made it clear that he was not ordering me not to tell them about my accidental gunshot wound. A reporter from Channel 8 called a few minutes later.

"Hello Corporal Fonte. I am from Channel 8. I heard that you were at MacDill and that you were shot over in Kuwait. May I ask you some questions?" inquired the reporter.

"Not now. I prefer not to talk about it right now," was my response.

“Well if you change your mind please give us a call,” he gave me his contact information and then we ended the conversation.

I was given a couple days of convalescence leave and then reported back to the hospital. An Air Force Colonel told me that he wanted to perform another debridement and that I would be placed under general anesthetic for the procedure. I remained inpatient at the hospital for another couple of weeks. Part of my discharge plan was instruction on how to pack the large exit wound on my outer left thigh, which I called my hole, with packing gauze that is narrow, stringy and long. My entrance wound, which was on my inner left thigh had mostly sealed up. Initially the entrance wound was cleansed using a long sterile Q-tip.

Upon being discharged from the inpatient unit at the base hospital I went home. To my surprise, friends and family had a welcome home party for me. I arrived on crutches. A childhood friend's mother had made a cake for me that was in the shape of a heart covered with purple icing. Since my injury was an accident, even though I was in a combat zone during a time of war and had no fault in it, I did not rate a Purple Heart Medal and this was her way of saying, “We are glad to have you home and thanks for your service.” Her gesture was touching and meant a lot to me.

I learned that my mother, Mima, had been going weekly with my father, Cruz, to Spanish prayer meetings to pray for others and me during Operation Desert Shield and storm. They in fact continued to go to the prayer meetings for some time after my return as they had built up relationships with their

prayer partners. My mother has been used by God to give me life on three occasions, I thought to myself. First, she gave birth to me. Second, she never let go of my wrist when I fell off of that inflatable raft at Siesta Key and nearly drowned. Third, she prayed for me. Charles H. Spurgeon gave a sermon where he stated, "Prayer is the sinew that moves the arm of God."

Receiving a thick envelope from my command at the Tampa Reserve unit, I quickly opened it to find a bundle of LES's (Leave and Earnings Statements). It was interesting to see how much I was being paid extra for Imminent Danger Pay (sometimes coined combat pay). Part of the comments section on the LES read:

** IMMINENT DGR PAY (IDP) INCREASED FR \$110
TO \$150 A MO EFF AUG 1, 1990. INCREASE FOR
JAN TO APR 1991 INCLUDED IN MAY 1 PAYDAY . .
. ** SGLI COVERAGE INCREASED FROM \$50,000
TO \$100,000 FOR ALL MARINES EFF APR 1, 1991.
PREMIUM IS \$8 FOR \$100,000 COVERAGE.

It had been a long time since I had my seabag. The last time I saw it was when I had placed all of my personal belongings inside of plastic bags back into the seabag to try and protect the contents from chemical contamination in the event we had been "gassed." I made an official request to have my seabag returned to me and was told that it was in storage. I later heard that they were having difficulty finding my seabag. In fact, it took nearly a year before my seabag was returned to me. Upon opening it, I saw that it had been repacked. It was very emotional to open it as memories flooded my mind. Some of the items that I pulled out of the seabag included a Mae West (a military flotation device, which I packed away as I would

not need it in the desert); my K-Bar knives; a Field Jacket; my green tinted crew goggles (the tint was to keep from being blinded accidentally by laser guided weapons); and my steel toed combat boots. Upon close inspection of my boots I saw my dog tag, which I had placed in the now cut bootlace. The dog tag had my dried blood covering it. I was thankful that the Marine Corps had located my seabag and got it back to me.

The Marine Corps took good care of me and made it possible for me to work from a recruiting station in Sarasota, Florida. My job was to assist the recruiters in whatever duties they assigned. The recruiters were very gracious to me. They made it possible for me to finish my day by 5:30 p.m. while they stayed at times until 9:00 at night making phone calls from high school lists and completing other needed duties.

It was necessary for me to utilize a cane during this time due to weakness and pain in my left leg. I received the wooden cane at MacDill. Early on my immediate boss, Sergeant who was an excellent recruiter, jokingly told me to keep my cane under the desk when potential applicants entered the office. It was obvious that I had sustained an injury and potentially embarrassing information could hinder our recruiting efforts. In fact we had later learned that the Army recruiter had told a young man in the hall who had come to inquire about the Marines not to join the Marines because “they shoot each other.”

It was educational and entertaining to see how the four services, Marines, Navy, Army and Air Force, interacted and competed intensely with one another when placed in such a close proximity to each other. The Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Sarasota was a very nice office found on the first floor

of other civilian offices We all tried to get applicants from the same high school lists and from the same “walk-ins,” which were those few individuals who came on their own volition and without having been contacted by a recruiter to talk to someone about joining. They often were either patriotic or seeking money for college. All too often the walk-ins were unqualified due to obesity, felony record or a high school drop out.

Sergeant and I went on a hunting trip for deer with the Army recruiter at Avon Park Bombing Range that hunting season. Even though we did not bag a deer we did have a good time. On another occasion, we went to support and watch the Navy recruiter perform as a stand up comedian. The Air Force recruiter was more to himself, but was very approachable. All of the recruiters were highly professional and had an important job to do, fill the ranks with qualified recruits. It was a hard and demanding job. Quotas at times seemed impossible. Hours were long.

On one occasion I went to my old high school, Riverview High School, to see if I could network with my former JROTC instructors to locate possible applicants for the Marine Corps. It was good to see Master Sergeant, one of my JROTC teachers when I went to Riverview High School. He was retired from the Army and had made a second career out of teaching at the high school as a JROTC instructor. He was encouraged me and told me not to be ashamed of the way I was injured. He said that my injury reminded him of when he was in Vietnam. He said that on more than occasion he witnessed terrible accidents from accidental gunshot wounds. He said that these wounds were a result of a soldier accidentally dropping his weapon, which would discharge, while coming down a hillside and

resulted in an entrance wound through the back of the soldier and a “nasty” exit wound through his groin.

While working with the recruiters, I requested a review of my case before a Physical Evaluation Board (P.E.B.) at the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. At the hearing was a U.S. Marine colonel and two navy Lieutenant Commanders, of which one was a reservist. The following is part of the report given to me concerning the findings.

Physical Evaluation Board
Hearing Panel
Bethesda, Maryland 20889-5608

From: President, Physical Evaluation Board
To: CPL Carlos A. Fonte, USMCR

...

Subj: DISABILITY EVALUATION FINDINGS OF
THE PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARD

...

1. On 21 October 1992, the Physical Evaluation Board reviewed your case by formal hearing and considered all evidence presented and of record in accordance with reference (a). The PEB made the following findings:

- a. You are physically unfit to perform the duties of your office, grade, rank or rating.
- b. Your diagnosis, international classification of disease code (ICD9) and disability rating are:

DIAGNOSIS AND ICD9 DISABILITY RATING
CATEGORY I: VA CODE PERCENT

ALL UNFITTING CONDITIONS

2. LEFT QUADRICEPS WEAKNESS, MILD
SECONDARY TO] 5314 10
GUNSHOT WOUND, 7289

CATEGORY II:

1. STATUS POST GUNSHOT WOUND TO LEFT
THIGH (M16), 8900

Basis. The basis for the PEB findings is contained in
enclosure (1).

2. Disposition. You are to be separated from the naval
service with severance pay, but without further disability
benefits in accordance with the provisions of 10 U.S.C.
1203 or 1206, as appropriate.

3. Opinion on Combat-Related Disability. It is the
opinion of the PEB that the unfitting condition(s) were
combat-related IAW 26 U.S.C. 104 (b) (3). The disability
was caused by an instrumentality of war and/or incurred
as a direct result of armed conflict.

...

RATIONALE:

...

ENCLOSURE: (1)

...

THE LODI (*Line of Duty Investigation) CLEARLY SHOWS THAT THE INJURY WAS THE RESULT OF AN ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE OF A MILITARY WEAPON DURING OPERATION DESERT STORM IN SOUTHWEST ASIA, AND WAS NOT THE RESULT OF MISCONDUCT OR WILLFUL NEGLIGENCE ON THE PART OF THE MEMBER. THEREFORE, THE DISABILITY IS RATABLE.

THE DEGREE OF IMPAIRMENT IS MILD TO MODERATE, WARRANTING THE 10% DISABILITY RATING UNDER V.A. CODE 5314.

THE INJURY IS CONSIDERED COMBAT RELATED.

In December 1992 I was discharged from the Marine Corps with an Honorable, Disability Discharge and a reenlistment code of RE-3P. The Lord had His angels watch over me. I felt His presence in my life very strongly. Through this trial and wound, I learned to trust in God. He knows what is best for me. No matter what trial, difficulty or hardship I go through, I can rely on Him to give me the strength to endure.

My discharge certificate states:

Honorable Discharge
FIDELI CERTA MERCES
from the Armed Forces of the United States of America
This is to certify that
CORPORAL CARLOS AUGUSTO FONTE SSN#
was Honorably Discharged from the

United States Marine Corps
on the 18th day of December 1992. This certificate is awarded
as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service

[Signature]

Major
Major, USMC

I returned to work at a Winn-Dixie Supermarket in the produce department. My experience of going through therapy opened my eyes to a career field, which I never knew existed prior to my injury. Even though my wound was now fully healed, scar tissue continued to cause pain especially when I was on my feet for long periods of time, which I would have to do at my job. Initially I took pain medication issued to me through the Veteran's Administration. Eventually, I stopped taking the pain medication and would find some relief in short pauses in activity, rubbing the scar site or just leaning to my right, bearing most of my weight, at least temporarily, through my right leg. I later learned, as a therapist, that physical therapy had stopped using Benodine lotion in whirlpool treatment due to its tendency to get rid of newly formed tissue as well as necrotic tissue. No wonder it took so long for my "hole" to close up.

In January of 1997, I began college and graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University with a Bachelor's of Science in Occupational Therapy in May of 2001. God's grace abounded in my life.

Later, I found out through reading a Marine Corps Times paper that a Cold War Certificate was being awarded to service members who served at any time during the Cold War, which seen as having ended with the fall of the Soviet Union. The official period of the Cold War was September 2, 1945

to December 26, 1991. The U.S. government was considering awarding a medal but opted for an official Certificate of Recognition instead. One only had to prove that they were eligible by sending a copy of their military discharge paper, commonly known as the DD-214 (DD stands for Department of Defense). I sent away for the certificate and received it in the mail. It bore the signature of the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. For me, this certificate has a lot of significance since it was the former communist Soviet Union that had allied itself with Cuba, the land where I was born and had made my own father a political prisoner at one time.

8

SOLDIER FOR CHRIST: MY SALVATION

With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him MY SALVATION.

“My Salvation”

I cried to Him, “Lord, I believe and repent!”
Now to serve you that is my hearts desire,
Sweet is life with Jesus Christ, whom to die for me God had
sent.
For I went to Him long ago as He did require!

You who claim to be his child,
Serve Him is the least you can do;
For it was upon you that He smiled,
Giving you true life you were born anew!

You who are lost and who seek His Salvation,
To you “Come oh sinner” is His only call;
Hesitate not instead make Him your habitation
Cry out, “Jesus save me,” on your knees and do not stall!

As an occupational therapist I have had the privilege to work in a variety of setting with a variety of people. I worked for a contract company in the Highlands County School District in central Florida. There I can remember many special kids that I

had the pleasure of working with, including two blind elementary kids. I like to think that I made therapy fun for them.

The skilled nursing facility in Tampa, Florida called Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center of Tampa was a place where I got to work with many elderly Cubans. Being Bilingual was very beneficial. Many of the Cubans I met there had been in the U.S. well before Castro's taking over of the island. They or their parents had immigrated to America to work at the cigar factories or to start new businesses.

In Saint Petersburg, Florida there is a great children's hospital called All Children's Hospital. It was here where I was blessed to work with special kids again. It was nice to see how the community really pulls together to provide the best possible care to these very special kids. Professional football players and actors often stop by to take pictures with the kids and to provide encouragement.

At Plaza West, part of Freedom Plaza a retirement community that was affiliated with the Retired Officer's Association (ROA), I got to work with and encourage many veterans from previous wars, including World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Two gentlemen that I got to interact with daily were both at the Battle of the Bulge during World War II, One was a Lieutenant and the other a Private. The private told me that he was under General Patton who was known as Blood and Guts. He laughed and said, "Yeah, his guts and our blood." Another fellow told me that he was the crew chief aboard Air Force 1 under President Johnson. He later became crew chief on Air Force 2 when Gerald Ford was Vice President of the United States. He remained crew chief but on Air Force 1 when Ford

became President. He recounted this story to me after President Ford had died since I had brought up the news. He remembered getting a tobacco pipe back to the President when he had gotten off the plane.

I made it my practice to pray for my patients, families, co-workers and others that I come across. Happily, I share my faith with all as opportunity arises and give them a chance to share their faith as well, while they are working of course. It seems like God turned something that was meant for evil in my life, war caused by a dictator madman, into something for good.

It was at my first job as an occupational therapist was as a contract therapist for a central Florida school system. I began working for the school district in the fall of 2001. On September 11th I arrived at one of my elementary schools and was in the school office checking the occupational therapy mailbox when a teacher came running in yelling, "Turn on the T.V. We have been attacked." As news trickled in about the World Trade Centers in New York City being hit and destroyed by radical Islamic fundamentalists who hijacked commercial airplanes, I found myself as most of America in shock and horrified that such evil was unleashed on American soil. Thousands lost their lives in those early morning hours. I later learned that the man behind the attacks was Osama Bin' Laden, a Saudi by birth. One of his reasons he claimed for attacking the U.S. was for having "defiled" Islam's holy land by having western troops, infidels, in Saudi Arabia, the land that contains the holiest cities for Islam, Mecca and Medina.

I felt the need to keep informed and follow all that was happening. Our newly elected president, President George W.

Bush, who was the son of President Bush during the Persian Gulf War, had promised that America would not rest until all those responsible and all those who seek to harm us are stopped. The Global War on Terror, as it was termed, was now underway. Did they call it a global war on terror? Does that mean it is a world war since it has a global reach? Who knows maybe in the future it will be recognized as World War III. Watching television as Marines landed in Afghanistan, the home of the terrorist organization headed by Osama Bin' Laden, gave me a strange feeling as if I was supposed to be there. Quickly the Taliban, the Afghan government that knowingly hosted the terrorist organization, was removed from power and terrorists were being hunted down.

A second front in the Global War on Terror was initiated. President George W. Bush had ordered Operation Iraqi Freedom to commence after months of failed attempts to get Saddam Hussein to fully disclose all weapons of mass destruction programs and weapons in the Iraqi arsenal, which was believed to have been reconstituted according to intelligence reports. We are living in different times and we could not afford to allow Saddam to have such weapons, which could fall in the hands of terrorists who were seeking to bring mass casualties to Americans on American soil. Some news agencies were dubbing this operation Gulf War II. Major offenses were over when Saddam himself was captured in a "rat" hole. He was later tried by Iraqis and hung closing a chapter in history, in my personal history, ending a ruthless and oppressive era under a madman. Even though Saddam was gone, insurgents continue to kill our brave men using Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). As a Persian Gulf War veteran I often look back and wish that we had marched on to Baghdad in 1991 so that this generation of

American warriors did not have to spill their blood today.

Another ruthless dictator who had personally affected my life and caused over two million Cubans or up to 20% of the population to flee Cuba, Fidel Castro, has stepped down as the president of Cuba where he had been leader since his revolution in 1959. His brother took over the presidency. Fidel's declining health had necessitated that he step down, although many believe he still "pulls the strings" behind the seen. One day he too will answer for his evil works. The Cuban history is a sad story. Families have been torn apart for over four decades while the power hungry communist brothers, who are self-appointed saviors of the Cuban people, do whatever it takes to stay in power. The impoverished people of the prison nation are in stark contrast to Fidel's recently publicized personal worth of nearly three quarters of a billion dollars.

Today we remain at war in Afghanistan and are winding down in Iraq. America has been attacked and her enemies continue to seek ways to harm her. We must remain vigilant. Let us collectively as a nation keep our defenders of freedom in our prayers and thoughts. We must seek favor from All Mighty God, for protection and victory in battle. The same God, who our forefathers trusted in and prayed to, is the God who we the heirs of this great land need to seek. Even though we have strayed from Him, if we as a nation seek His forgiveness and turn to Him, He will once again come to our aide and deliver us from our enemies.

Can we defeat an enemy who seems to find a seemingly endless supply of suicide bombers? I suppose we can. Was it not the people who sent kamikaze attacks that we defeated

over 60 years ago? Of course our cause was backed up by a generation of selfless military and civilian Americans. Those Americans, we call the “Greatest Generation,” gave up their lives in battle by the hundred of thousands, over 400,000 in 4 years of fighting. They happily and patriotically rationed everything that was needed for the war effort including gasoline. They answered the call and yes they were drafted. The reserves and guard were activated. Three of the five Marines who raised the flag on Iwo Jima were reservist. Collateral damage was part of the objective to bring a defiant nation into submission and seek an unconditional surrender. America was not deterred from utilizing her greatest weapon — two atomic bombs were used to save possibly millions of lives that may have been lost in an all out invasion of mainland Japan. No one wants war, especially the military. But when it comes we owe it to our military to engage in war only when we have decided that we will do everything possible to ensure their victory and not “tie” their hands behind their backs.

As an occupational therapist I seek to serve those that I work with in hopes to help them improve their functional independence and return to those activities that are meaningful and purposeful in their lives. So often we take for granted our health. It is not until our own health or the health of a very close loved one fails that we recognize the frailty of life. Life truly is brief. Our eternal destination must be decided before it is too late. Indecision in the area of eternity is a decision against acceptance of the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, the very Son of God whose death on the cross over 2000 years ago made it possible to have our sins forgiven. Peace with God can be obtained only through Jesus Christ.

Slowly, growing in faith and maturing as a Christian, I have learned that to worship, glorify and honor my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is the most important thing that I can do with my life. No longer do I desire to live for myself. Getting plugged into a local Bible-teaching church and serving my fellow man, especially of the household of God, is the least that I can do for my Lord.

America is blessed to have young men and women willing to join the U.S. Marines to protect our nation from hostile nations or groups who wish to do us great harm. We also are blessed to have men and women called by God to enter into “boot camp” for the ministry in seminary schools across this great land. One such place is Bob Jones University, the “Parris Island” for future pastors, missionaries, youth leaders and music leaders for tomorrow. It is a spiritual warfare that these men and women will enter into, which at times may even cost them their very lives in far away lands on the mission field.

The Christian hymn “Amazing Grace” written by John Newton has lyrics that mean so much to me as a believer in Jesus Christ. Before I had been “born again,” a term utilized in the Bible in John Chapter 3 which describes the spiritual change that occurs when one turns from sin and accepts Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross, I simply thought that this hymn sounded nice when played with bagpipes:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, That saved a
wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now
I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my

fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first
believed!

Thru many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far, And grace will
lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope
secures;
He will my shield and portion be, As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shin-
ing as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when
we'd first begun.

We are all born blind. We do not see our need for God. And if we do see the need for God, He certainly doesn't have any known standards for our conduct. We are our own judge and know what is best in our own personal lives and the lives of others. This explains how we can allow a national sin, such as abortion, to continue. How barbaric it seems to destroy a human life. We make ourselves feel better by arguing that "it" is not a life or baby until "it" is born. At Parris Island drill instructors did their best to get us to not see the "enemy" as human. "It" is the enemy. Abortion will one day be seen as the most grievous violations of "human rights" ever. The blood of tens of millions who have been "exterminated" cry out for justice and need for repentance. Where are those who claim to be the "civil rights" leaders for the underrepresented? May God forgive us and may we turn away from such evil practices in this nation. We

broke the chains of slavery, freed men from extermination gas chambers, tore down unjust laws based on a man's skin color and freed a small country from an overwhelmingly superior invading force. Can we not stop the flood of blood stemming from the extermination of the weakest among our human race, the unborn?

I am eternally grateful to my merciful and loving God for giving me freedom from my sin. I look back through life's dangers, toils and snares and recognize that it is only through God's grace that I have made it safely thus far. It is His grace that will lead me home! May you the reader also seek His grace and meet me there one day. God bless the U.S.A.!

The following is an alphabetical list of those men and women who gave all, their very lives, during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm [used by written permission, all rights reserved: Havemann, D. W. (1994). The Gulf War Veterans Memorial. Retrieved from <http://www.gulfwarmemorial.com>]. May we always remember them and not just on Memorial Day. It is because of men and women such as these who willingly sacrificed for our freedom and for freedom around the world. Jesus Christ said in the book of John Chapter 15 verse 13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." To these men and women, their families and all others who also so sacrificed, our nation is forever grateful.

Adams, Thomas Ray Jr
Alaniz, Andy
Allen, Frank Choai
Allen, Michael Ray

Ames, David Robert
Anderson, Michael Fredrick
Applegate, Tony Ray
Arteaga, Jorge Isaac
Atherton, Steven Eric
Auger, Alan Randy
Avey, Hans Christian Richard
Awalt, Russell Frank
Bartusiak, Stanley Walter
Bates, Donald Ray
Bates, Tommie William
Beaudoin, Cindy Marie
Belas, Lee Arthur
Belliveau, Michael Louis
Benningfield, Alan Harden
Bentzlin, Stephen Eric
Benz, Kurt Allen
Betz, Dennis William
Bianco, Scott Francis
Bland, Thomas Clifford Jr
Blessinger, John Perry
Blue, Tommy Angelo
Bnosky, Jeffrey John
Boliver, John August Jr
Bongiorni, Joseph Phillip III
Bowers, Tyrone Roneya
Bowman, Charles Leroy Jr
Boxler, John Thomas
Brace, William Carl
Bradt, Douglas Lloyd
Bridges, Cindy Deanna Jane
Brilinski, Roger Paul Jr

Brogdon, Tracy Darlene
Brooks, Tyrone Michael
Brown, Christopher Beernard
Brown, Darrell Kenneth
Brown, James Robert
Budizan, Steven A.
Buege , Paul Garfield
Bunch, Ricky Lee
Burt, Paul Lawrence
Butch, Michael Richard
Butler, Tommy Don
Butts, William Thomas
Cady, Andrew Talbot
Caldwell, Thomas Robert
Calloway, Kevin Lee
Campisi, John Francis
Carr, Jason Charles
Carranza, Hector Jr
Carrington, Monray Corzere
Cash, Clarence Allen
Chapman, Christopher Jones
Chase, Richard Warren
Chinburg, Michael Leo
Clark, Barry Maxwell
Clark, Beverly Sue
Clark, Larry Marcellous
Clark, Otto Frank
Clark, Steven Douglas
Cleyman, Marc Hugh
Codispodo, Edward Michael
Cohen, Gerald Anthony
Collins, Melford Ray

Connelly, Mark Alan
Conner, Michael Ray SR
Connor, Patrick Kelley
Cooke, Barry Thomas
Cooke, Michael Dennis
Cooper, Ardon Bradley
Cooper, Charles William
Cooper, Dallas Ray
Cormier, Dale Thomas
Costen, William Thompson
Cotto, Ismael
Crask, Gary Wayne
Craver, Alan Brent
Crockford, James Frederick
Cronin, William David Jr
Cronquist, Mark Richard
Cross, Shirley Marie
Crumby, David Ray Jr
Cunningham, James Bernard
Curtin, John Joseph
Dailey, Michael Craig Jr
Damian, Roy Tydingo Jr
Daniel, Candace Moriah
Daniels, Michael David
Danielson, Donald
Daugherty, Robert Lawrence Jr
Davila, Manuel Michael
Davis, Marty Revohn
Dees, Tatiana
Delagneau, Rolando Adolfo
Delgado, Delwin
Delgado, Luis Roberto

Diffenbaugh, Thomas Michael
Dillon, Gary Scott
Dillon, Young Min
Dolvin, Kevin Ray
Donaldson, Patrick Anthony
Dougherty, Joseph Douglas III
Douthit, David Quentin
Douthit, David Allen
Durrell, Robert Lee
Dwyer, Robert John
Edwards, Jonathan Ross
Eichenlaub, Paul Richard II
Fails, Dorothy Lee
Fajardo, Mario
Farnen, Steven Paul
Felix, Eliseo Celestino
Fielder, Douglas Lance
Finneral, George Scott
Fitz, Michael Lloyd
Fleming, Anthony Javanne.
Fleming, Joshua John
Fontaine, Gilbert A.
Foreman, Ira Lynn
Fowler, John Clinton
Galvan, Arthur
Gardner, Samuel Melvin Jr
Garrett, Mike Alan
Garvey, Philip M
Garza, Arthur Oscar
Garza, Daniel
Gay, Pamela Yvette
Gentry, Kenneth Blane

Gillespie, John Howard
Gilliland, David Alan
Godfrey, Robert Gary
Gologram, Mark Joseph
Gordon, John Miller
Graybeal, Daniel Eugene
Gregory, Troy Lorenzo
Grimm, William David
Guerrero, Jorge Luis
Haddad, Albert George
Haggerty, Thomas Joseph
Hailey, Garland Vance
Hampton, Tracy
Hancock, Joe Henry
Hansen, Steven Mark
Harris, Michael Anthony
Harrison, Timothy Roger
Hart, Adrian Jay
Hatcher, Raymond Elijah
Haws, Jimmy Dewayne
Hawthorne, James Dale
Hector, Wade Elliott
Hedeen, Eric Douglas
Hein, Kerry Peter
Hein, Leroy Emil
Henderson, Barry Keith
Henrygaray, Luis A
Herr, David Rohrer
Herrera, Rosendo
Heyden, James Paul
Heyman, David Lawrence
Hill, Timothy Eugene

Hills, Kevin John
Hoage, Adam Todd
Hodges, Robert Kevin
Hogan, Larry Gene
Holland, Donnie Ray
Hollen, Duane Writner
Hollenbeck, David Clarence
Holt, William Aaron
Holyfield, Ron Randall
Hook, Peter Samuel
Horwath, Raymond Louis
Howard, Aaron Winship
Hughes, Robert Joseph
Hulec, Rande Jay
Hull, Daniel Vance
Hurley, Patrick Robert
Hurley, William Joseph
Hutchison, Mark Edward
Hutto, John Wesley
Huyghue, Wilton L
Jackson, Arthur
Jackson, Kenneth Jerome
Jackson, Mark David
Jackson, Timothy Jerome
James, Jimmy Wesley
Jarrell, Thomas Randall
Jenkins, Thomas Allen
Jock, Dale William
Joel, Daniel Dean
Jones, Alexander
Jones, Daniel Mooers
Jones, Glen Dean

Jones, Phillip John
Josiah, Troy
Kamm, Jonathan Hall
Kanuha, Damon Valentine Keaw
Keller, Kenneth Thomas
Kelley, Patrick Shannon
Kemp, Nathaniel Henry
Keough, Frank Scott
Kidd, Anthony Wayne
Kilkus, John Robert
Kime, Joseph Gordon
King, Jerry Leon
Kirk, Reuben Gideon
Knutson, Lonty Aaron
Koritz, Thomas Flagg
Kramer, David Walter
Kutz, Edwin Brian
Lake, Victor Theodore
Lamoureaux, Dustin Craig
Lane, Brian Lee
Lang, James Michael
Larson, Thomas Stewart
Lawton, Lorraine Kerstin
Lee, Richard Ruffin
Lewis, Ralph Ernest
Linderman, Michael Eugene
Lindsey, J Scott
Long, William Edward
Love, James Hartman
Lumpkins, James Henry
Lupatsky, Daniel
Madison, Anthony Erik

Mahan, Gary Wayne
Maks, Joseph Dillon
Malak, George Nassif
Manns, Michael Nunnally
Martin, Christopher Andre
Mason, Steven Glen
Matthews, Kelly Lynn
May, James Blaine
Mayes, Christine Lynn
Mccarthy, Eugene Thomas
Mccoy, James Robert
Mccreight, Brent Allen
Mcdougale, Melvin Dennis
Mckinney, Carol Louise
Mckinsey, Daniel Clayton
Mcknight, Bobby Lewis
Middleton, Jeffery Thomas
Miller, James Robet
Miller, Mark Allen
Mills, Michael Ward
Mills, Randal Craig
Mitchell, Adrienne Lynette
Mitchem, Earnest Frank
Mobley, Phillip Dean
Moller, Nels Andrew
Mongrella, Garrett Adam
Monroe, Michael Neal
Monsen, Lance Milo
Montalvo, Candelario Jr
Moran, Thomas Joseph
Morgan, Donald Wayne
Morgan, John Kendall

Mullin, Jeffrey Edward
Murphy, Donald Thomas
Murphy, Joe
Murray, James Clarence
Myers, Donald Ray
Neberman, James F
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Noble, Shawnacee Loren
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Noonan, Robert Allan
O'brien, Cheryl Lorraine
Oelschlager, John Lee
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Olson, Patrick Brian
Ortiz, Patbouvier Enrique
Pack, Aaron Alan
Paddock, John Michael
Palmer, William Fitzgerald
Parker, Fred Russell Jr
Patterson, Anthony Troy
Paulson, Dale Leonard
Perez, Daniel Guillermo
Perry, Kenneth James
Phillips, Kellyá D
Phillis, Stephen Richard
Plasch, David Gordon
Plummer, Marvin Jerome
Plunk, Terry Lawrence
Poole, Ramono Levias
Poremba, Kip Anders

Porter, Christian Jay
Poulet, James Bernard
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Price, Richard Mark
Rainwater, Norman Ray Jr
Randazzo, Ronald Milton
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Reichle, Hal Hooper
Reid, Fredrick Arthur
Rennison, Ronald David
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Rivera, Manuel Jr
Rivers, Ernest
Robinette, Stephen Ray
Robson, Michael Robert
Rodriguez, Eloy Angel Jr
Rollins, Jeffrey Allan
Romei, Timothy William
Rose, Peter Jon
Rossi, Marie Therese
Rush, Scott Alan
Russ, Leonard Allen
San Juan, Archimedes Panabe
Sanders, Henry Junior
Sapien, Manuel Bernardo Jr
Satchell, Baldwin Lovell
Schiedler, Matthew James
Schmauss, Mark John
Scholand, Thomas James
Schramm, Stephen Gerald
Schroeder, Scott Arthur
Schuldt, Bradley Robert

Scott, Brian Patrick
Seay, Timothy Bernard
Settimi, Jeffrey A
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Shaw, Timothy Alan
Sheffield, Edward Eugene
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Sherry, Kathleen Marie
Shukers, Jeffrey Warren
Siko, Stephen Julius
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Smith, James Melvin Jr
Smith, Michael Sean
Smith, Russell Griffin Jr
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Snyder, John Mather
Spackman, Brian Keith
Speicher, Jeffrey William
Speicher, Michael Scott
Spellacy, David Michael
Squires, Otha Bennett Jr
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Stephens, John Bradley
Stephenson, Dion James
Stewart, Anthony Dashawn
Stewart, Roderick Ternail
Stokes, Adrian Leonard
Stone, Thomas Gerald
Streeter, Gary Eugene
Strehlow, William Allen
Stribling, Earl K

Summerall, Roy Junior
Swano, Peter Lawrence
Swartzendruber, George Richar
Sylvia, James Henry Jr
Talley, Robert D
Tapley, David Lloyd
Tatum, James David
Thomas, Phillip Jessie
Thorp, James Kevin
Tillar, Donaldson Preston III
Tormanen, Thomas Robert
Trautman, Steven Robert
Turner, Charles John
Underwood, Reginald Coutney
Valentine, Craig Eugene
Valentine, Roger Edward
Vegavelazquez, Mario
Vigrass, Scott Nolie
Villarreal, Carpio Jr
Viquez, Carlos Alberto
Volden, Robert Lee
Wade, Robert Crtis
Waldron, James Eric
Walker, Charles Scott
Walker, Daniel B
Wallington, Michael Craig
Walls, Frank James
Walrath, Thomas Eugene
Walters, Dixon Lee
Wanke, Patrick Anthony
Ware, Bobby Maurice
Warne, David Albert

KUWAIT: A DESERT STORM REFLECTION

Weaver, Brian Paul
Weaver, Paul Jennings
Wedgewood, Troy Michael
Welch, Lawrence Norman
West, John Doege
Whittenburg, Scotty Lynn
Wieczorek, David Mark
Wilbourn, James Newton III
Wilcher, James
Wilkinson, Phillip L
Williams, Jonathan Mathew
Winkle, Corey Lee
Winkley, Bernard Sean
Witzke, Harold Paul III
Wolverton, Richard Vincent
Worthy, James Earl
Wright, Kevin Edward
Zabel, Cark Wesley
Zeugner, Thomas C.m.





This is my story and reflections on how an omnipotent, omniscient and loving God, reached down to His creation and delivered me out from of one of life's great trials—war and even more importantly, liberated me from sin's final effect, eternal separation from Himself. The war is the Persian Gulf War in 1991. The book takes the reader on a journey of my life from being adopted by this great nation after having arrived as a two-year-old child on a Freedom Flight from communist Cuba to Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm and finally becoming an occupational therapist after having gone through physical therapy due to an accidental gunshot wound in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.



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